

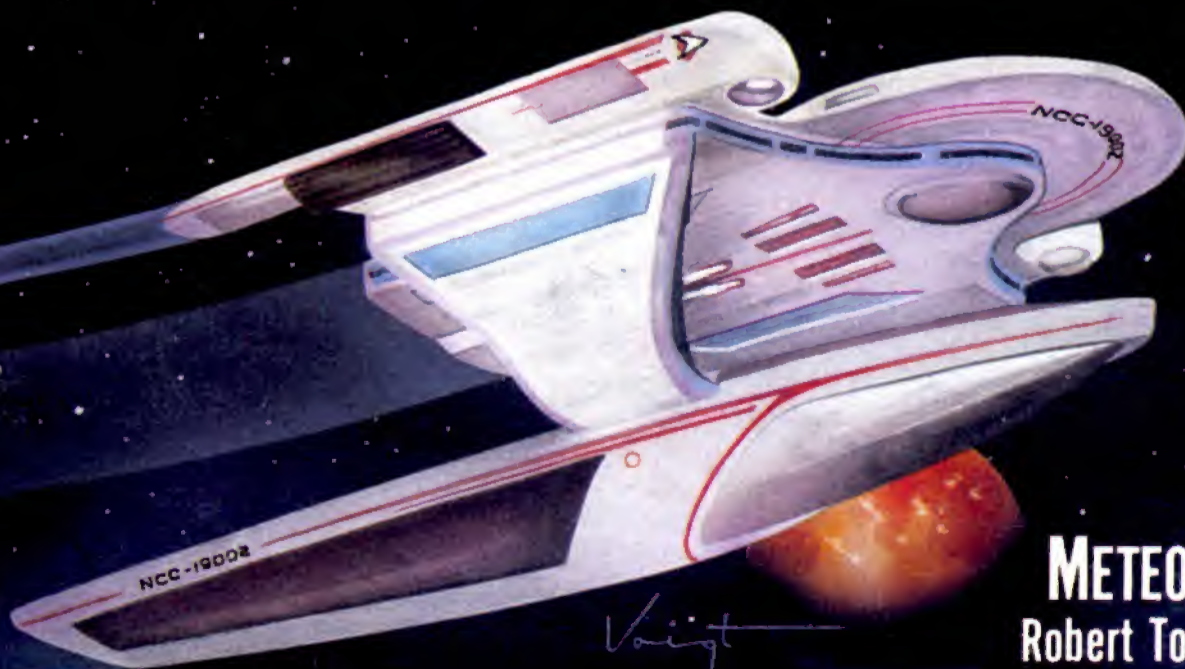
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STAR TREK DEEP SPACE NINE



METEOR MAN
Robert Townsend's
answer to Superfly

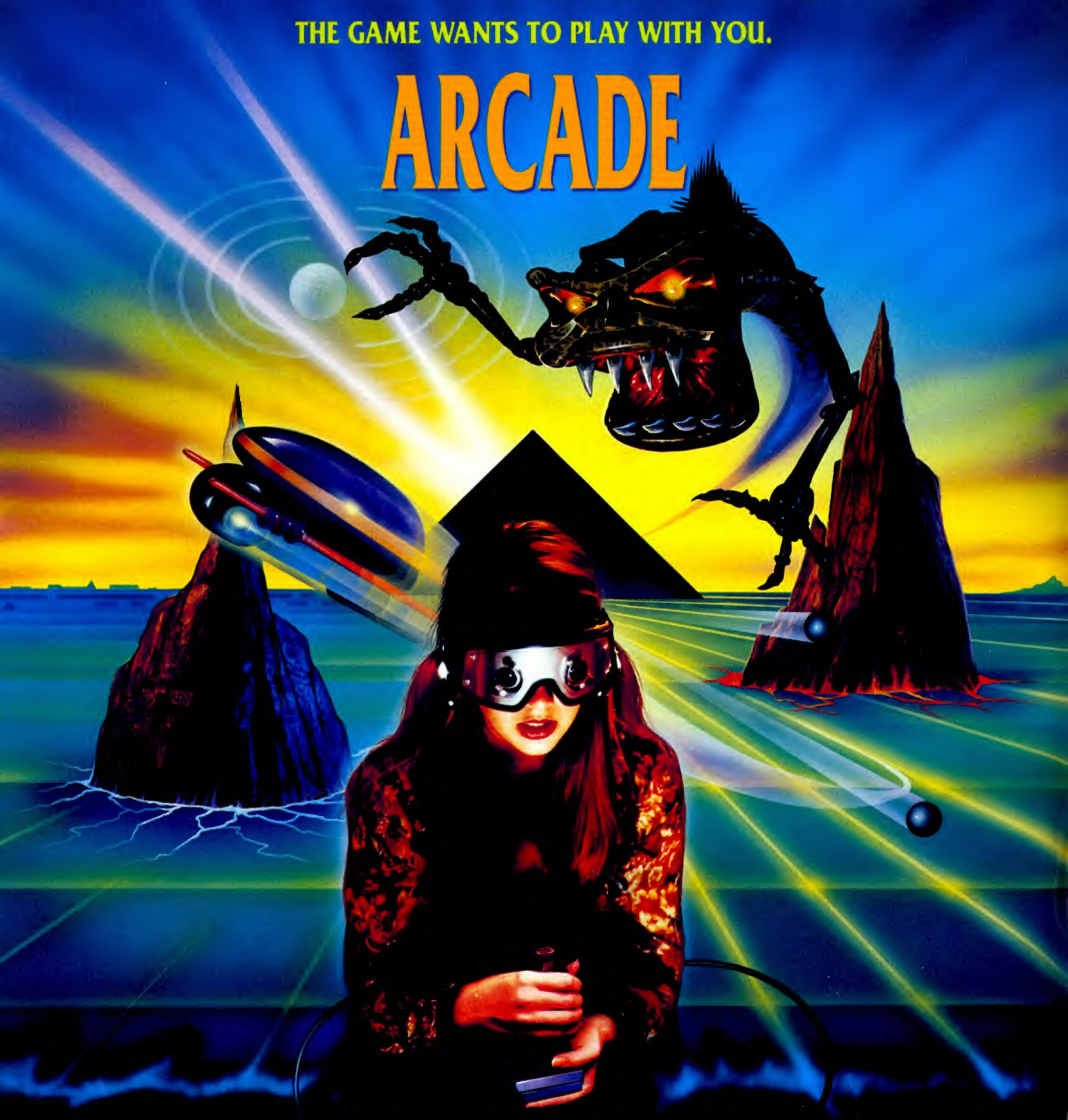
MUTANT NINJA TURTLES MOVIE MUTINY
Comic creators Eastman & Laird put III back on track

Volume 23 Number 6



THE GAME WANTS TO PLAY WITH YOU.

ARCADE



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VOLUME 23 NUMBER 6

The magazine with a "Sense of Wonder."

APRIL, 1993

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE premiered on syndicated television stations the first week in January, as early as January 3rd in some markets. The new series' pilot, "Emissary," aired just as this issue was going to press, and proved to be a sensational, entertaining and intellectually engaging two hours of television. By the time you read this, the new series will have aired its fourth episode, barring pre-emptions or repeats. Whether you've been hooked from the start, or are now just discovering the show, I think you'll find our cover story on the creation of the series fascinating reading.

Resident STAR TREK expert Mark A. Altman provides another exclusive behind-the-scenes dispatch from the final frontier in chronicling the genesis of the new show. In the past, Altman has written our popular annual review/pre-view issues devoted to STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, and was an observer on the set and in Paramount's executive offices during production of the new spin-off. His 28-page report includes interviews with series creators Rick Berman and Michael Piller, on-set profiles of the new cast of characters and coverage of nearly every facet of production, from makeup, to special effects, to production design. Altman gives special attention to the development of the series' pilot script, and the writing staff charged with coming up with stories for the first season's 12-episode run.

The success of STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION has resulted in a blossoming of science fiction on television at a time when the genre seems to have withered as a vehicle for theatrical motion pictures. DEEP SPACE NINE may be the answer for those who miss their science fiction fix but have found STAR TREK creator Gene Roddenberry's brand too tepid for their tastes. The new show has an air of excitement and adventure, an electric cast of characters brought vividly to life by a terrific acting ensemble, all with the production values of big-budget feature films. Now that's something I could easily get hooked on watching every week.

Frederick S. Clarke



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FIRE IN

The true story of Travis Walton, a logger

By Mark A. Altman

While UFO abduction stories are usually fodder reserved for sensationalist television exposes and the cover of the *Globe*, director Rob Lieberman (*ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS*) hopes to change all that with *FIRE IN THE SKY*. Based on a "true" story in which members of a logging crew in Snowflake, Arizona, claimed that one of their team had been abducted by aliens, the film was written and co-produced by Tracy Torme (*STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION*). Paramount opens the film March 12.

Along with executive producers Joe Wizan, Todd Black and Torme, Lieberman brought the project to the then Paramount head, Brandon Tartikoff. Lieberman's *ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS* had been the first film Tartikoff had put into production after he assumed control of the studio. Stanley Jaffe, head of Paramount communications, gave the project a green light. "They had one caveat, however," said Lieberman. "They said you better make these special effects really good because Stanley Jaffe was involved with *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND* and he doesn't want it to be cheesy."

Visualizing the extraterrestrial odyssey made by the abducted logger, Travis Walton, recalled under hypnosis, was the picture's biggest challenge. Hired by Lieberman and Torme to envision the alien ship was production designer Nilo Rodis, a veteran of such films as *RETURN OF THE JEDI* and the last two *STAR TREK* installments at Paramount. "I gave Nilo a major challenge, which was—I don't want to be married to a storyboard," said Lieberman. "I wanted to be able to go into places with cameras and shoot 'em like they're really happening, the way I shot the rest of the film, which created a lot of problems and expense in terms of trying to create these effects. There's a lot of Steadicam and hand-held stuff that you don't generally

"I wanted the UFO experience to be as keen and visceral for the audience as I could make it," said director Rob Lieberman. "It conjures up very primal fears."



James Garner plays a state investigator sent to Snowflake to get to the bottom of the UFO claims, with D. B. Sweeney as Walton, ostracized by the small town.

see in those kind of sequences so that the audience will ultimately be given the impression that they're there. There's a great deal of movement and swish pans that get you through the sequence."

Lieberman's goal was not to rehash previous science fiction conventions, but to push the envelope and create imagery never before seen on the silver screen. "I wanted this experience to be as keen and visceral for the audience as I could make it," said Lieberman. "I wanted to try and give the audience a sense of what it would be like to be abducted. Not what it would be like in a fantastic movie, but what it would actually be like. The whole idea was to create as much reality in the abduction sequences as in the human drama."

The key for Lieberman was weightlessness. "The entire sequence aboard the ship is weightless," said Lieberman. "If you wake up and your first sense is you're floating, what kind of fear would that put into you? You would know immediately, without even moving that you weren't on

earth anymore. None of the full-length feature films have had the opportunity to do that because it's so pricey. But for the short expanse of time that we spend in outer space we're able to create some unbelievable visuals of this guy being trapped, and having a predator stalk him, and being helpless because he doesn't know how to control his body in a weightless environment. I thought that would conjure up some very primal fears in people."

Charged with visualizing Nilo Rodis' fantastic alien imagery was Mike Owens, who headed the ILM visual effects team that brought Lieberman's extraterrestrial voyage to life. "I decided to go much more in the organic vein, not unlike the original *ALIEN*, where the stuff seemed to have life to it rather than *STAR TREK* sleek metal lights and switches," said Lieberman. "It seems to me that we make certain human assumptions that if we went through the industrial

revolution, every planet must have gone through it and come up with steel and aluminum. That's not necessarily true. I think there are substances that we don't know. The environments our protagonist finds himself in are much more organic and Giger-esque than other outer space encounters. I'm not doing a space movie. I'm doing a movie about real people in a real town who encounter space people."

The film was shot on location in Oregon on a sparse 41-day schedule. The bulk of the action deals with the dramatic implications of the abduction's aftermath. "The town never did believe them," said Lieberman, "although they all did pass lie detector tests. For the sake of the audience I present both sides of the argument and allow them to come to their own conclusions."

"There's a wonderful *TWILIGHT ZONE* that I've always carried around in the back of my mind while making this film, 'The Monsters Are Due On Maple Street.' That was to me, kind of loosely,

THE SKY

in Snowflake, Oregon, abducted by a UFO.

the structure of this movie. In a way the *leitmotif* of this movie is alienation. The town alienates these six boys. The lead character is alienated from his family. Relationships crumble and fall apart because it's impossible for a group of Americans living in Arizona to accept the idea that maybe someone was taken away by aliens. It's got a lot of colorings to it. At one point it becomes a Capra movie. One of the crew, Mike Rogers, goes in front of the entire town and says, 'I'm one of you. I'm not an alien. Why are you indicting me?' What I wanted to do was make a film not unlike RIVER'S EDGE or MELVIN & HOWARD or 12 ANGRY MEN. It's a film about real people confronted with a real dilemma. Were these boys telling the truth? I think it's got some classic strokes in it."

Lieberman admitted that, like Torme, he has harbored a life-long interest in the study of unidentified flying objects and hoped to have such an opportunity to bring this story to the screen. "I am completely convinced there is other life in this universe," said Lieberman. "It would be ridiculous to think we're the only life in an infinite universe. In terms of how prevalent they are in terms of visitation, I'm not certain. I've always felt there was an audience for stories about UFOs. Steven Spielberg with CLOSE ENCOUNTERS had covered the groundwork pretty thoroughly from kind of a childlike point of view of space, but the material had never been dealt with in a serious, dramatic movie from an adult point of view."

Contributing to the reality of the film is the strong ensemble cast put together by Lieberman, a veteran of the YOUNG RIDERS pilot and the short-lived NBC series DREAM STREET. "Working with ensembles is always very exciting for me with the dynamics of group acting," said the director. "Here was an opportunity to find six really diverse personalities. Each one is extremely well defined. I wanted to go and rehearse before we started shooting so each actor had a very firm concept of who they were and how they fit into this puzzle. I didn't want six clones that all blended into the next and you couldn't tell who anyone was. The film to me, always, is about human drama. It has some sensa-



D.B. Sweeney as Walton, about to be taken for a ride. Effects by ILM recreate the visceral experience of a UFO abductee in Paramount's docudrama, opening March 12.

tional elements to it, but it really is this terse, mystery story with a lot of underpinnings of intrigue."

Chosen to portray the role of Mike Rogers, the character whose daughter the abducted Travis Walton was planning to marry, was actor Robert Patrick, who played the malevolent T-1000 in TERMINATOR 2. "I thought, here's a guy who has absolutely no personality," recalled Lieberman. "He was so robotic in it, there was no dimension. They insisted I should meet him. This man walked in the door and looked nothing like the T2 character. He's the antithesis of the T2 character. He's the warmest, nicest, sweetest human being I ever worked with. He is an absolutely brilliant actor because he was able to subjugate his entire personality in T2 throughout the entire movie."

Also in the cast are the legendary James Garner (GREAT ESCAPE), D.B. Sweeney (MEMPHIS BELLE) as the abductee, Travis Walton, Peter Berg (SHOCKER)

and Craig Sheffer (A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT). "Craig Sheffer, who is now being lauded for A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT, plays the exact opposite character in our film," said Lieberman. "In RIVER he's a very pure, innocent, honest, sensitive and introspective young man. In this he's a bad guy, or he's suggested to be the heavy. And for the youngest boy in the film I chose Henry Thomas not only because he's a wonderful actor but because I thought it would be kind of a kick to have the kid from E.T. in this movie."

With all the awe-inspiring effects work that caps the story, Lieberman still feels the film's biggest selling point is its faithfulness to the real events that happened in Snowflake. "The biggest tagline is, this is a true story," said Lieberman. "I think that's the greatest intrigue. There's no way to hide it's about UFOs, but I want people to know it's not just about UFOs and two hours of science fiction. If they're led to believe that, they're going to be extremely disappointed."

As for the future, Lieberman, an ardent genre fan, hopes to once again toil on a science fiction project. "I would absolutely do other projects in the science fiction genre," he said. "It's one of my greatest loves. I'm looking at comics. The studio actually has STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND with Tom Hanks in development. It's one of the great books. That's a project I'd definitely jump on." □

Rob Lieberman directs Robert Patrick, the heavy of TERMINATOR 2, as the fiancée of Walton's sister.



WARLOCK

THE ARMAGEDDON

Julian Sands returns in the sequel to the 1991 shocker, but is it a franchise?

By Simon Bacal

Roman numerals are out. Trimark's sequel to *WARLOCK* (1991), opening nationwide in March, is titled simply *WARLOCK: THE ARMAGEDDON*. Julian Sands returns to the role of the 16th-century sorcerer who travels through time to wreak havoc on 20th-century America, attempting to unleash Satan—his father—from the confines of Hell. Sands searches for six Druid runestones to be used in the ritual, opposed by the inhabitants of a small rural town descendants of the ancient Druids and mankind's only hope for survival. Produced by Peter Abrams and Paul L. Levy—whose Tapestry Films was responsible for such titles as *POINT BREAK* and *THE KILLING TIME*—the \$6.5 million project was directed by Anthony Hickox (*HELLRAISER III*) in seven weeks last July and August.

Sands is delighted to return to *WARLOCK 2*. "Being back in the role is very invigorating," said the British-born star of *A ROOM WITH A VIEW* and *THE KILLING FIELDS*. "It's something that I've been talking about for some time. There is a strong Western element to the storyline. It's a bit like *HIGH NOON* as he gathers together the runestones."

Director Hickox sees the new film as a fresh start for the



Paula Marshall and Chris Young, descendants of the ancient Druids in modern-day rural America, who become undead warriors to thwart the Warlock's evil.

series. "Our film is a totally different story from the original *WARLOCK*," said Hickox during a break in shooting at Disney's Golden Oak Ranch. "It's as though the original film didn't happen. We've also developed the warlock a little further, with a different look. He doesn't have a ponytail this time. We've modernized his image by giving him a far cooler haircut."

Another distinguishing factor is *WARLOCK II*'s lack of humor. The sequel is, in Hickox's words, "being played very seriously." Noted Hickox, "This film is a very dark movie, more violent than the original. In fact, it's probably got some of the most shocking stuff that

I've ever seen on film. We treat the warlock as the AntiChrist who is determined to raise his father from the grave. He has a childish amorality in the sense that for him there is no right or wrong. He just does what he has to do."

Sands seemed to relish the sequel's extra measure of villainy. "That's part of his beauty," said Sands of the warlock. "The servitude of his purpose is so pure in its malevolence and wickedness, that there is a grace and poetry there. The film's approach is interesting in its borrowing from James Bond, Hammer Horror and Captain Marvel. It integrates the essential qualities which allow the warlock to

be 'the Warlock.'"

Fighting the warlock are teenagers-turned-Druid warriors Chris Young and Paula Marshall. Young, seen in *THE GREAT OUTDOORS* and *RUNESTONE*, plays Kenny. Marshall, who made her debut in Hickox's *HELLRAISER III*, plays his girlfriend Samantha. "In order to become a warrior, you have to die first," said Young, covered with blood, a combination of syrup and red dye. "After the first couple of weeks of shooting, we suddenly got into the blood and physical stuff. And it hasn't let up since we started. Most of this film is action. The hardest parts are intense scenes where you have to get yourself into a state of hysteria. I do that by hyperventilating because the realism comes with your breathing pattern, especially when you're doing horror stuff. After all, the more scared you are, the faster you breathe. Suddenly, you can't feel your arms due to heavy breathing. Depending on the length of a take, it's easy to black out."

The film's horror action—Young is tied to a tree which comes to life and has a lead pipe thrust through his stomach—reminded him of the amateur films he made as a kid, especially one called *KITCHEN FLOOR MASSACRE*, which had him tied down with strapping tape, outfitted with blood bags rigged to burst in his shirt.



Sands as the Warlock, minus the ponytail hairdo of the original (l), indestructible in makeup effects by Bob Keen, searching for the runestones (r) to resurrect Satan.

Marshall described her character as "an average high school girl who falls in love." Marshall becomes a Druid warrior by committing suicide. "I take a knife to myself," she said. "I'm just helping my boyfriend out." Marshall laughed.

The film's original script by Kevin Rock (*HOWLING*s VI and VII) was also worked on by associate producer Sam Bernard (*JAKE AND THE FATMAN*), who was brought on to prepare Rock's script for shooting. "The Druid element gives the story a lot of depth," said Bernard. "The hero is really hooked into the action by his destiny to become a warrior." Noted Hickox, "I've always been interested in the Druid cult. We make the assumption that the Druids

moved to America after escaping [religious persecution] in England during the witch-hunting days."

Providing makeup and special effects is Bob Keen and his Image Animation crew, a frequent Hickox collaborator who most recently worked on *CANDYMAN*. "This film has a ton of special effects," said Keen. "One of the big sequences is the warlock's rebirth. He takes a victim and makes her instantly pregnant. She gives birth to this small, mucousy thing out of which the warlock is reborn as a grown man. It's yucky but quite spectacular."

Keen's favorite effect involved fashioning a map of flesh with which the warlock locates the crucial runestones. "The victim's stomach bubbles

and distorts as the shape of America pushes through the skin," said Keen. "The corners suddenly split and curl up into a map. Veins rise up to show where the runestones are. It's kind of wild. I don't think anyone's seen that before. It was built out of foam rubber, using bladders and a series of mechanical rigs."

A planned effects sequence Keen had yet to shoot called for an art dealer to be transformed by the warlock into a living piece of art. "The warlock promises him the greatest treasure in the world," said Keen, who envisioned the shot as a combination of makeup, a radio-controlled prop and optical effects. "It's going to be a fun scene to shoot," said Keen, who noted that he works ahead, as well as off-the-cuff. "Every day, you're not only creating effects that you've had some time to prepare for, but you're also thinking on your feet and coming up with new effects almost in front of camera. It can be a problem, but it's the element that I find the most interesting because it's the ultimate in creativity."

Sands said he worked closely on *WARLOCK II* with director Anthony Hickox, whose father—Douglas—directed the 1973 Vincent Price horror film, *THEATRE OF BLOOD*. "That film was an influence on my

enthusiasm for the genre," said Sands. "It's very providential that Tony and I are working together on *WARLOCK II*. He's a young director of tremendous energy. He really knows how to assimilate those elements which have been so important to him [Sam Peckinpah, *The Avengers* and *James Bond*] and filter them through his own way of looking at images and creating dramatic situations. He almost uses the kind of license I've only encountered working with [director] Ken Russell. It's a cocktail of action and images which is very watchable and exciting." □

Filming Sands blue screen as he's about to drop a levitating victim from whom he's just conned a runestone.



The opening, as Druid priests observe the birth of the Warlock, Satan's son.



THE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES MOVIE MUTINY

Eastman & Laird put the series back on its comic book tracks.

By Dale Kutzera

It all started back in 1983 when Peter Laird and his wife were sharing a house with Kevin Eastman. A few months earlier the two men had formed Mirage Studios, a freelance illustration firm, in Northampton, Massachusetts, and spent their evenings watching bad television and drawing. "One night Kevin just drew a turtle standing upright with a mask on, with nunchakas strapped to his forearm," remembered Laird. "I thought it was the goofiest thing I'd ever seen, so I had to draw my own and change a few things. Then he drew four of them and we called them the 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.' A couple days later we decided to do a story to explain the name and that's how the first comic book came out."

That first, self-published issue was the beginning of a wild ride for Eastman and Laird, which took off when Mark Freedman of Surge Licensing tracked them down. Freedman had a vision: Turtle toys, games, figures, lunchboxes—the sky's the limit. It was only a matter of time



Comic book creators Peter Laird (l) and Kevin Eastman flexed their contractual muscle to make the story of Part III less kiddie oriented.

before Hollywood called.

Tom Grey, the producer of Golden Harvest's TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES III, and the architect of the company's popular and highly profitable film series, recalled that it was TURTLES I scriptwriter Bobby Herbeck, who first pitched him the idea of filming Eastman and Laird's comic in 1988. Herbeck had been given a copy by TUR-

TLES I producer Kim Dawson. "My first reaction was not very positive," said Grey. "I didn't want to be involved in something this ludicrous. Two or three months later, after Bobby nagged me about having a meeting with Kim to discuss the project. I finally looked at the comic. I thought, 'We could do this. This is nothing more than stunt people in rubber suits.'"

Grey traveled to Northampton to strike a deal with Eastman and Laird. "The only rights I bought were to make the live-action films, not to have any piece of the merchandising," said Grey. "That was all locked up [by Freedman]. I told Peter and Kevin we're not going to spend \$40 million on this picture, but I think we can pull it off." Grey hired music video specialist Steve Barron to direct. "I really liked his work," said Grey, "and I knew someone with that kind of visual flair would probably be the best to bring this from a comic book to a motion picture."

Barron brought in Simon Fields, his partner in Lime-light Productions, the com-



The Turtles of Part III, opening March 19, nationwide from New Line Cinema.

pany credited for the production of TURTLES I. "I hired Barron as a director, period," said Grey. "A lot of directors work with producers, so, in essence, I said if you have a producer, you can bring him on. That was Fields. We gave them [Lime-light] a production credit which has somehow been misconstrued, that Lime-light made this on behalf of Golden Harvest. It's the reverse. The film was 100% a Golden Harvest operation we financed. That's not to take away from their contribution. They were a good team, and I credit them with bringing in Jim Henson."

The addition of the Henson

Director Steve Barron, now partnered with Eastman, who made Part I a hit.





The Turtles are the work of makeup artist Rick Stratton and Eric Allard's North Hollywood-based All Effects, replacing Henson's Creature Shop at a cost savings.

Creature Shop went a long way to reassure Eastman and Laird that the film would be a quality effort. "We wanted to keep the character likeness as strict as possible, as well as control what the actual story would be," said Eastman, who is now a partner with Barron in Limelight productions. "The black and white comics were written for an older audience. The animated Turtles were reworked for a much younger audience. For the movie we wanted to see if we could find something right in the middle, that could reach out to audiences young and old. I felt we achieved that with the first one. Steve Bar-

ron—who we wish could have come back for the second and third films—came in with an appreciation and respect for the material and comics in general."

Noted Laird, "One thing that both Kevin and I have learned about the movie industry is that unless you have tons of money to do it all yourself, you've got to compromise. I thank my lucky stars that we connected with Steve Barron and Jim Henson, who actually respected what we had done and wanted to put it on the screen."

Barron credited the success of the first film to his decision

The Turtles with John Aylward in Part III, a time travel story set in Feudal Japan, a more adult, action-packed scenario mandated by Eastman & Laird.



HOLLYWOOD TURTLES

"Hollywood feels that when it comes to making movies, comics people should just get out of the way," said Eastman. "That's why so many comic book adaptations have sucked."

to stick close to the Eastman and Laird comics. "I just think that when there is a real talent in writing and in concept you've got to look at what's there," said Barron. "Those guys spent many years thinking about nuances of character and story. A lot of filmmakers throw everything away except the name and the character and start again. I looked carefully, before making any decisions on the movie, at all the background comic material and found within it a lot of what made up the first movie. Before we even wrote the script, I kind of harvested the best of the work that had been done over many years."

The success of the first film brought the kind of acrimony a \$138 million gross tends to foster. Limelight sued Golden Harvest for the profits they claimed had not been distributed to them. According to Eastman, such a suit is typical Hollywood business practice. "It was my understanding when we entered into the first movie deal that to collect the money we have to sue them; we have to audit them to get it. You make a movie, you get a little advance, and if it has some success then if you want your money you have to sue them to get it.

"My understanding of the friction between Steve Barron and Golden Harvest is that it's a stereotypical situation of a creator wanting to make the best movie he can and having to deal with a business suit who doesn't understand that. Barron asked for an extra day of shooting in New York and had a suit reply, 'Not only do you not get an extra day, you get two taken away from the original ten you had.' Things like that caused a lot of friction and animosity."

Grey countered that Golden Harvest has been generous to

its profit participants. "[The Turtles] have been immensely profitable for everyone involved. I'm very proud of the fact that we pay an enormous amount to our profit participants. Our payouts are extraordinary to the people that have points. We pay out millions and millions of dollars to our third party participants—that would be the rights holders Eastman and Laird, the writer, the director and the stars who have some points in it."

Money and lawsuits aside, Eastman and Laird were concerned about Golden Harvest's approach to sequels. "Their attitude seemed to be, 'We know what was wrong with the first one so we'll fix it,'" said Laird. "My answer was, 'Hey, the film cost \$12 million to make and made \$135 million.' What was wrong?' I really didn't understand their point." "They said it was too dark," recalled Eastman. "It wasn't too dark. They said it needed more humor. It didn't need

Harder-edged than the films: the comic book original, celebrating its eighth anniversary, cover by Rick Veitch.



TURTLES III

FIXING THE FRANCHISE

Golden Harvest agreed to abandon the kiddie approach of Part II for a harder edge.

By Dale Kutzera

The main hangar of Astoria's Tongue Point Coast Guard base hasn't seen this much action since World War II. Scores of cars fill the parking lot. The numerous trucks of the All Effects animatronics team have taken up residence along one side. In the back, looking out over a seldom used airstrip to the mist-shrouded Columbia River, are dining tents, caterers' wagons and trailers for the stars. It is early August 1992 and as the 45-day shooting schedule for **TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES PART III** comes to a close, the

Michaelangelo cradles Travis Moon, reaching for emotional depth as well as a broad action-oriented audience.

days are long and tempers are short. There is also an enthusiasm that seems unanimous that this Turtles film is something quite special.

The town of Astoria is located in the far northwest corner of Oregon, perched on the hills that rise steeply from the broad mouth of the Columbia River. It is about as far as you can get from the sewers of New York, and that's the point, according to Tom Grey and David Chan, the Golden Harvest producers who run the live-action franchise. "We needed to change directions on the third picture," said Grey. "I think everyone will be amazed at the direction we've taken the Turtles. You're going to see the Turtles in ancient Japan, with a lot more humanity than the second one."

You remember the second one, **THE SECRET OF THE OOZE**—Vanilla Ice, the ninja rap and two evil foam-rubber puppets that made the Turtles seem downright real in comparison. If a film that grosses \$78 million can be a disappointment, **TURTLES II** was it. "We knew the second picture was a bit soft," Grey admitted. "We ran a little afraid that the violence would get us a PG 13 and we didn't take the time to get the story right. We took the gamble that we had to get it out there before this thing peters out."

It hasn't petered out. The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles have remained the most popular line of toy action figures for five years running. The t-shirts, bed sheets and lunch boxes are still going strong. Noted Grey,



Leonardo set loose in Feudal Japan in Part III, an idea plucked from the comics after Eastman & Laird turned down Golden Harvest's suggested kiddie concepts.

"We decided for the third picture to take our time to come up with a story that will propel this thing into a fourth and fifth film. To accomplish this, Grey and Chan hired Canadian writer/director Stuart Gillard.

"When I was interviewed by the producers about a year and a half ago I ran out and saw number two," said Gillard. "They asked me, 'What did you think?' and I said 'Frankly, if I were to get involved in number III, I would like to make it a little harder edged.' Normally that would be the kiss of death for a writer/director, because I was basically saying I didn't like their second movie. By fluke it happened to be just what they wanted to hear."

Comic book creator Kevin Eastman, who worked with

Gillard on the film's story, thinks the director has succeeded. "It is definitely as good as the first one," said Eastman, who flew to L.A. in early November to view a rough cut. Eastman was especially impressed with Gillard's visual references to the films of Akira Kurosawa. "The opening scene gave me the shivers," said Eastman. "This huge red sun covers the whole screen, while this samurai comes from the shadow across the tundra."

New Line Cinema opens **TURTLES III** March 19. Grey said no decision on a fourth film will be made until the first two weeks' worth of grosses from number III are counted. Gillard noted he has already been asked to do **TURTLES IV**. □

Canadian Stuart Gillard directs Raphael in a story co-written with Eastman & Laird, hired by Golden Harvest to recapture Part I's dark, comic book ambience.



R I G H T I N G T U R T L E S I I I

“[Golden Harvest] approached [Part II] with the idea to scale it down toward younger kids,” said Laird. “And that was the case when they submitted the first idea for the third movie.”



The Turtles on horseback, Eastman & Laird's action-packed story for Part III, filmed in the Pacific forests of Astoria, Oregon, standing in for ancient Japan.

more humor. They said the Turtles used their weapons too much. They didn't. Basically, Hollywood, in my opinion, feels that when it comes to making movies, comics people should just get out of the way and let them do their job ... which is why so many adaptations of comic book characters into movies have completely sucked.”

Eastman and Laird said they enjoyed working with writer Todd Langen on TURTLES II. The desire to create a kinder, gentler Turtles movie, however, meant that much of the film was re-written after the initial treatment, a point at which Eastman and Laird's involvement legally ends. “Todd did a great job on finishing up the first movie script,” said Eastman. “Todd came out and worked with us on the second one and after that point was not allowed to talk with us anymore, which made it kind of difficult. But he did the best job he could under the circumstances. The frustrating part with the movies is that we never get any credit for writing them. We get that ‘based on characters created by ...’ credit, but you look at issues one, nine, ten and eleven and you have 90% of the first movie. Pete and I wrote a good part of the second movie which unfortunately got re-written on the set. They took out important things like the story, and replaced it with gags.”

Added Laird, “The second film had its moments. It's not something I hate. But it definitely went far too close to being goofy, non-threatening, silly Turtles. The first movie wasn't ultra-violent or nasty, but it had a real edge to it. The Turtles had a real emotional depth.”

Barron took some satisfaction that the softer, more comedic Turtles of the second film proved less successful than his darker effort. “The only real creative point I fought for on the first one, up to the end of shooting, was the dark tone. I was allowed to really do the script I wanted to do, but the dark tone was something I constantly battled for. They wanted a kiddier, brighter, more saturated color look. I was making the film something I would

want to go see.”

Eastman and Laird were determined to get the Turtles back on track with the third film. “It's no secret to Tom Grey or anybody else that I was unhappy with the second film,” said Laird. “I was unhappy with their approach from the get-go. They approached it with the idea that they were going to lower the level of it toward younger and younger kids. And that was explicitly the case when they submitted the first idea for the third movie.”

The first of several treatments for TURTLES III, prepared by director Stuart Gillard, was called RETURN TO TURTLE ISLAND. According to Laird, one of the highlights was a scene in which the Turtles, after being reprimanded by Splinter for not keeping to the shadows and practicing their ninja secrecy, “roar out of Lincoln Tunnel in a vehicle which is a cross between a '57 Caddy and a Mad Max vehicle, painted fluorescent green, with no top.

Michaelangelo is standing up in the back seat, strumming an air guitar. Fortunately, we were able to convince them that was not the right approach.”

The story for TURTLES III eventually emerged from story conferences between Gillard and Eastman and Laird. “After long and tedious days of trying to get some ideas down, we pulled out an idea we had originally written for the comic book,” said Eastman. “It was a time-travel story where the Turtles actually go back to feudal Japan and finally meet real ninja samurais. We gave Stuart the idea. We really like the final draft of the screenplay. It's got a lot of potential.”

When they aren't working with filmmakers, Laird and Eastman are occupied with developing and approving the countless products and merchandise bearing the Turtle image. Much of their time is spent maintaining the franchise, adding new energy and new characters to keep it fresh and alive. Unfortunately, it is a task that often draws them

away from the sketch pad. Issue #50, published last August, was the first to be drawn and written by Eastman and Laird in years. “The most frustrating thing about the success is in order to sustain it and just manage it we've had to draw ourselves away from the board,” said Laird. “We used to spend eight hours a day drawing and one hour a day doing office work. Now we're doing eight hours of office work and one hour drawing.”

While Laird continues as Mirage Studios, Eastman has formed Tundra Publishing to pursue his own expanding interests. In addition to buying *Heavy Metal* magazine, Tundra has nearly 70 comic book and graphic novel projects in the works, several being developed for film and television with Steve Barron and Lime-light. The two companies have a first-look arrangement in which comic titles are developed for film and television and vice versa. “They keep us in touch with what's going on in the comic world and we keep them in touch with what's around in the film world,” said Barron. “We felt there would be times when you would explore things first in the comic area to try out characters you couldn't necessarily do in other mediums. For us to go through the comic and the writing process is a very good thing. You push the boundaries a bit more, and by pushing those boundaries you bring back what you've discovered into television or film.”

Neither Eastman nor Laird could have predicted the success of the Turtles craze, nor can they envision now how long this ride will last. Quipped Eastman, “Maybe my grandchildren will find Turtles on the collectors' market and say, ‘Oh, I remember that fad.’” Mused Laird, “Is it a flash in the pan or another Disney property—a perennial? There's no telling. Kevin and I have always said that the height of all our success with the Turtles was the day we realized that we could draw this comic book and make a living doing something we really loved to do, and not have to eat macaroni and cheese and work at McDonalds.” □

METEOR MAN

Robert Townsend, writer, director and star, films ode to Frank Capra.

By Dan Persons

One thing's for sure: Robert Townsend doesn't like to be pigeonholed. Garnering his first major attention with the satirical, credit card-financed *HOLLYWOOD SHUFFLE*, in which he thoroughly roasted a movie industry all too eager to reduce classically trained black actors to a corps of leering, shuffling Superfly clones, he then shifted gears, directing, writing and starring in the period musical, *THE FIVE HEARTBEATS*. Now, in another total about-face, Townsend goes for all-out action-adventure/fantasy in *THE METEOR MAN*, which MGM opens March 26.

Once again working as triple-threat auteur, Townsend scripted the story and directed himself in the role of Jefferson Reed, a typical, inner-city school teacher who's hit one day by "a magical, emerald meteor." The hapless educator finds himself imbued with a full complement of super-powers: the ability to fly, laser-vision, the works. Jefferson suddenly finds himself charged with cleaning out crack houses, bringing peace to rival street gangs and defeating the forces of corruption and decay wher-



Townsend and rap group Another Bad Creation, cast in the film's action as *The Baby Lords Crime Show*.

ever they arise (so long as they don't arise above street level—Jefferson's fear of heights obligates him to keep his airborne antics to an altitude of no more than four feet off the ground).

Joining Townsend in his efforts at crime-fighting is a high-powered cast that includes Robert Guillaume and Marla Gibbs as Jefferson's parents, Bill Cosby as a homeless man with a soft spot for canines, James Earl Jones as an apathetic neighbor, Biz Markie as a crack house bouncer, and Frank Gorshin, the Riddler himself, as a drug kingpin.

"In my other films I worked

with actors who weren't really well known," said Townsend. "I'd go to functions and Mr. Cosby would say, 'You know, I'd really like to work with you.' Same thing with Ms. Gibbs and James Earl Jones." The actors proved true to their words. When Townsend eventually called, they all said, "Yes." Townsend admitted to being a little nervous directing some of his idols. Jones had played the voice of Darth Vader in *STAR WARS*. Townsend, a veteran stand-up comic, mimicked Jones' dark, sonorous tones to illustrate how they related on the set, "Yes, Robert, I sense your presence!"

Townsend also packed the film with star-power behind the camera. John Alonzo (*CHINATOWN*, *SCARFACE*) served as director of photography, while Industrial Light and Magic was signed to do the film's 112 special-effects shots, with Ned Gorman serving as effects producer and Bruce Nicholson working as supervisor. On directing his first film with extensive effects work, Townsend said, "I found myself shooting three cameras with my regular crew and four cameras with ILM. And their camera is incredible—the Vista Vi-

Townsend as teacher-turned-superhero, comic book costume by Ruth Carter.

sion camera is huge. It's a monstrosity.

"It was hard because I had to say exactly what I wanted visually. How the meteor floats in space. How it explodes. What pieces linger. They [ILM] make it easy because they have artists who give you sketches and pencil and video tests to show you movement and timing."

It was up to *METEOR MAN* producer Loretha Jones (*SCHOOL DAZE*, *THE FIVE HEARTBEATS*) to make sure that ILM's effects largesse didn't blow the film's budget totally out of the water. "We teased them," said Jones. "We said, 'ILM stands for Industrial Light and Money,' or 'I Love Money.' I was clear with them up front about what our budget limitations were. If they had a creative discussion with Robert for any reason and I wasn't there, no work could go forward unless we discussed it."

The film's locations took the crew into some of the roughest neighborhoods in Los Angeles, Baltimore and Washington D.C. "We were in a rough neighborhood, but the film was about what their lives were about: trying to change," said Townsend. "It was colorful,"



“I like to go to movies and escape,” said Townsend. “You get so much negative stuff in this world. I think people need more movies about everyday heroes.”

noted Jones. “One night we shot off our automatic weapons and in the distance we heard automatic weapons respond. The bureaucracy in Baltimore was a little slow. But the community itself was absolutely wonderful. There’s nowhere we couldn’t have gone and shot and not had cooperation. They essentially opened up three blocks of their neighborhood and let us run it as if it were our own, private back-lot.”

The decision to transport the production to the streets of Baltimore was a rushed one, precipitated by the coincidental scheduling of Los Angeles location work for the same time that the Rodney King verdict was being delivered. “We were shooting a hospital sequence downtown in Los Angeles the night the riots broke out,” recalled Jones. “We were at a hospital, shooting around the corner from their emergency entrance. We had set up our own fake emergency room entrance and it was a scene in the beginning of the film where Robert’s being brought in on a stretcher. I had been observing things, and I suddenly saw smoke in the distance. I went upstairs and could see that it was a huge fire. I came down and spoke to our

security and they explained what was going on.

“Within a very short period of time, the emergency room—which usually gets very little business at that time, which is why they let so many people shoot there—started having all of these cars drive up. The ambulances were either having trouble or not going into certain areas. Consequently, wounded people were being dropped off by their friends. We had a couple carloads of gang-bangers drop off their wounded and swing around the corner and point their guns at our crew just for the heck of it. I saw that, and whispered to my A.D. that we were wrapping immediately. I wanted everybody packed up and out of there right away.”

Despite the abrupt shift in venue to a rain-drenched Baltimore, principal photography on *METEOR MAN*, which started in mid-April, wrapped on July 4th, 1992, only three days behind schedule. In November, Townsend was putting the finishing touches on his first cut, and awaiting the remaining effects from ILM to splice into the film. “I still haven’t gotten hit by the meteor,” he said, “because I’m still waiting for that shot. I’m

looking at the film and saying, ‘When does it *hit* me? I’m still waiting.’”

ILM willing, the film will debut theatrically in March, a good month for superheroes, given the track-record of the *TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES*. Whether *METEOR MAN*’s fortunes will prove as generous for Robert Townsend depends, to a certain extent, on the appeal of the man himself. According to Loretha Jones, whatever good karma Townsend has acquired is well-deserved. “What you see on-screen is exactly what he is in real life,” she said. “As he writes, he infuses all of his work with his personality. That’s really, really nice. You don’t have to worry that someone’s such a great character on-screen and then you work with him and he’s a screaming maniac.”

As one of the vanguard crew who helped open Hollywood to the new corps of black directors, Townsend’s status cannot be disputed, nor are his perceptions anything to dismiss out of hand (indeed, for this interview, his most incisive humor

came when he assayed a group of black directors divvying up the lives of activists for future biopics). Yet, of all his colleagues, from the hard-bitten John Singleton to the urban slapstick team of the Hudlin Brothers, to the radically didactic Spike Lee, Townsend’s view of film is perhaps the most in touch with Hollywood’s more optimistic past.

Noted Townsend, “I think you get so much negative stuff in this world. I like to go to movies and escape. It’s like watching *MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON*. I love that movie because he fights so hard and in the end he *does* win. I do believe that if anything stands in your way, when you stand for something positive, you can win. I think people need more movies like that. I’m a big Frank Capra fan. I’m a big Billy Wilder fan and these gentlemen tackled all kinds of subjects, but it was about the everyman, the everyday hero. And I think there’s not enough of that. I think a lot of movies today have down endings.

“I kinda like being positive, I dunno. That’s just me.” □

Inner city superheroics: Townsend learns to fly on an effects dolly’s pole arm.



HIDEOUS MUTANT FREEKZ

By Steve
Biodrowski

According to Alex Winter and Tom Stern, their feature length co-directing debut was first envisioned several years ago as a slasher-horror movie entitled *GEYSERS OF BLOOD*. "We wanted to remake D.W. Griffith's *INTOLERANCE* as a Freddy Krueger-slasher movie," explained Winter, "and thank God, for us, nobody bought it. So we went back and rewrote it with our writing partner, Tim Burns. We got a development deal at Fox. They paid us to write it in its newest form, based on making it a comedy, not a slasher movie." The result, a black comedy called *HIDEOUS MUTANT FREEKZ*, is tentatively set by Fox to open nationwide in February.

Winter (one of *THE LOST BOYS* and Bill of *BILL AND TED* fame) stars as Rick Coogin, an arrogant Hollywood movie star who signs a deal to become a spokesman for a toxic chemical being pawned off to unsuspecting third world countries by sleazy corporate president Dick Brian (William Sadler, who played Death in *BILL AND TED'S BOGUS JOURNEY*). Unfortunately, Coogin pays a visit to Skugg's Fabulous Freek Land and Mutant Emporium, where proprietor Elijia C. Skuggs (Randy Quaid) uses the toxic chemical to turn him and other visitors into his sideshow attractions.

Costarring as another visitor-turned-victim is Megan

Alex Winter apes Lon Chaney in a warped makeup tour de force.



Winter (r) in Freek makeup by Steve Johnson with his comedy co-director Tom Stern.

Ward, who served her genre apprenticeship in such Full Moon video efforts as *CRASH AND BURN*, *ARCADE*, and *TRANCERS II*. Also featured are cameo appearances by Morgan Fairchild, Brooke Shields, Mr. T (as the Bearded Lady!) and *BILL AND TED* co-star Keanu Reeves as Juan the Dog Boy. Extensive makeup designs are the work of three separate companies: Tony Gardner's Alterian Studios, Steve Johnson's XFX, Inc. and Screaming Mad George's Surrealistic Visual Effects.

"We started with Screaming

Mad George," explained co-director Stern. "We're friends, and we've always admired his work. We brainstormed with him years ago about different freaks we could make. He did some sketches for us which we used when we took the earlier script around to the studios. Then when we actually got the money we kept him on. It was too big a job for one person—I can't think of another film that has so many major characters in totally different prosthetic makeups, so we asked around. Our friend Sam Raimi suggested Tony Gardner from

DARKMAN, and we knew of Steve Johnson's work."

"We had a lot of characters that had to be divided up, but our main challenge was that they were our main characters," added Winter. "All you've got to look at is these clicking eyeballs in gooey skins, and you're supposed to walk out of the theatre feeling something for these slabs of latex!"

A big challenge was that Winter appears in makeup through most of the film. "Bill Corso at Steve Johnson's shop designed my makeup and applied it," said Winter. "He did an amazing job. Because I'm in so much of the film, the makeup had to be durable. Half my face is creature, so they had to give that side of my face character so that it didn't look like a slack piece of foam. And my regular teeth on the right side of my face had to blend in with this big monster set of teeth on the left side. That was innovative—you can't see the blend."

Johnson suggested Winter has a kind of Lon Chaney Sr. fixation to choose to subject himself to the painful rigors of the makeup process. Countered Winter, "No, it was just stupidity. It hurt like a sonofabitch."

Despite the makeup burden, Winter noted that it didn't get in the way of his directing. "Half my face was normal and the monster teeth could pop out, so I could speak," Winter explained. "People got used to it; at first they were a little taken aback. When we had day players, I'd see this look of terror in their eyes. The hours



Winter as Rick, a Hollywood movie star mutated by exposure to toxic waste. Inset: Winter fully transformed in makeup designed by Steve Johnson.

were a little weird. I had to sleep in it sometimes so that I didn't have to get up at the crack of dawn, but, for the most part, I went through a four-hour makeup job every day."

Although a video assist monitor provided instant replay, Winter preferred relying on his co-director to judge how effectively his performance showed through the makeup. "Tom and I have been directing together a long time," said Winter, referring to their days at NYU and their weekly MTV series *THE IDIOT BOX*. "I don't have to run back and forth to see every take, because we're both directing. I can feel when a take works. If it needs directing, then I get directed. Tom and I have a common vision of what the character should be. I don't have to waste time and run back and forth to look at myself on every take."

Asked to describe the process of co-directing a feature with Winter, Stern waxed philosophical: "I use the metaphor: I pound the spigot into the tree; Alex collects the sap. Sometimes I also used the metaphor: I grease the ball-bearings in a wheelchair; Alex rides it over a cliff. One time I used the metaphor: Alex cracks the eggs to make pancakes; I go out to buy the maple syrup."

As Stern paused to recall other metaphors, Winter continued, "In comedy, teams are not uncommon. Any director will tell you that production is the hellish section of it anyway. Everyone can figure out how to write together or edit together, so it's a matter of getting out there and getting what you need. The cast and crew get used to being directed by two people; we try to alternate when we talk to them, but by the end of production we usually just shout."

Although the project was originally a weirder, low-

budget cult item, Winter and Stern believe that the finished film will not fall outside the mainstream. "For the most part, it's light-hearted," said Winter. "We didn't go toward the ugly side of the story. It's definitely got some weird stuff going on, but I wouldn't say it has a dark undercurrent. It's theme is not dark at all, it's downright sappy. We hung all these elements on a straightforward narrative in terms of the moral arc my character goes on."

On the other hand, Stern acknowledged, "It's all relative. To us it's really light, but other people think it's the darkest thing they've ever seen. It's full of sick stuff in the manner of *Mad* magazine. It's not there to disturb; it's all in fun."

Examples of "sick stuff:" in Skugg's sideshow booths are a midget clown who will "fart your weight" and not only a petting zoo but a heavy-petting zoo. Other booths encourage customers to "Kiss a Cretin," "Feel a Corpse," "Remove a Spleen" or "Fondle a Fetus." Said Winter, "That was the most hardcore stuff we had. A lot of that did offend people. Now, it's gone in the blink of an eye; it's background stuff. 'Fondle a Fetus' was not accepted by the women on our crew. That was our one attempt to step out and show our true colors."

Such an outrageous set must inevitably have its share of funny stories, one of which Stern related. "We were shooting second-unit late at night,



Alex Zucherman as Stuey, another victim of the Freak show run by Randy Quaid, makeup by Steve Johnson.

with a midget dressed up as the clown who farts people's weight. We were lighting the shot, and this guy on the crew starts yelling at the gaffer. 'I'm getting a shadow from the midget—move the damn midget, will you?' Everybody was getting uncomfortable. I said to Alex, 'This is getting out of hand—we have to say something,' because this guy kept screaming, 'Move the midget!' Finally, Alex went over and had a word with him. This was actually a black guy, but he turned completely red with embarrassment. He was mortified. He hadn't realized what he was doing. He had been talking about a Mole-Richardson 'Midget Light.'" □

Makeups by Tony Gardner: The Bearded Lady (Mr. T), Sockhead (Karyn Secell), the Worm (Derek McGrath) and Julie/Ernie (Megan Ward/Michael Stoyanov). 20th Century-Fox is tentatively set to open the outrageous comedy in February.



STAR TREK

DEEP SPACE NINE

Like a Gene Roddenberry, exec producer Rick Berman is reaching for the stars.

By Mark A. Altman

I was warned upon arriving on the incredibly impressive and cavernous sets of STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE, the new STAR TREK spin-off which premiered on independent stations across the country in January, that the sexual Holo-suites located above the Promenade on the second level of stage 17 aren't sexual Holo-suites at all. "In the pilot they have these Ferengi chasing women," said my publicity escort to the set. "We can't call them prostitutes. Do not call them sexual Holo-suites or a brothel!"

Series co-creator and executive producer Rick Berman wasn't aware of the game of semantics surrounding pleasuring in the 24th century, and didn't seem worried about it. "We'd be honored to have Dan Quayle speak about us," joked Berman, the overlord of two of the most ambitious and expensive series on television. "We've had a lot of episodes we've gotten mail about."

Berman had more pressing matters to worry about than who might be upset over the seedier side of DEEP SPACE NINE. And for those who insist that STAR TREK's new-found predilection for sexual tomfoolery goes against the scriptures of Gene Roddenberry, TREK's revered creator, they should know that



Berman at the helm, the 46-year-old Paramount executive in charge of two of the most ambitious, expensive shows on television—but will lightning strike thrice?

Roddenberry's penchant for exploring sexual issues was legendary. In the original bible for THE NEXT GENERATION, it was Roddenberry who expounded at length on the size of the Ferengi sexual organ.

STAR TREK purists who decry the "darker" elements of DEEP SPACE NINE as uncharacteristic of Roddenberry's 24th century are wrong. DEEP SPACE NINE is in fact more faithful to Roddenberry's STAR TREK vision than even THE NEXT GENERATION. DEEP SPACE NINE revives the interpersonal conflict and witty banter of the classic show's popular triumvirate—Kirk, Spock and McCoy—and retains the elements of the new show that have made it one of the most successful series on television.

"From my point of view, Gene Roddenberry created, without being maudlin, an eternal idealization of the future," said DEEP SPACE NINE production designer Herman Zimmerman, who designed the original sets for THE NEXT GENERATION as well as the movies STAR TREK V and VI. "The characters that he created came out of his imagination pretty much whole cloth. The beauty of Gene's future was his ability to mix and match personalities that played well together. I think any good director, writer,



The new cast (clockwise from top left): Rene Auberjonois as Odo, the station's shape-shifting policeman, Colm Meaney as Miles O'Brien, former Enterprise transporter chief; Avery Brooks and Cirroc Lofton, station commander Sisko and son Jake, Nana Visitor as Kira Nerys, Sisko's second-in-command, Siddig El Fadil as medical officer Dr. Julian Bashir, Armin Shimerman as Quark, the Ferengi barkeep, and Terry Farrell as Dax, the Trill science officer.

STAR TREK DEEP SPACE NINE

RICK BERMAN, TREK'S MAJOR DOMO

*Deep into it, producing the new series
and THE NEXT GENERATION.*

By Mark Altman

Executive producer Rick Berman, the major domo behind Paramount's DEEP SPACE NINE, was the one who successfully shepherded STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION through its early production turmoil to critical and ratings success. Entrusted by Paramount with the future of the studio's biggest tent pole, Berman created the new STAR TREK series with co-executive producer Michael Piller, while still supervising the production of THE NEXT GENERATION's sixth season.

Berman acknowledged that the new series is taking up a lot of his time, but was quick to refute charges from fans that THE NEXT GENERATION is being allowed to wither, pointing out that he feels the sixth season has been one of the show's strongest yet. "We're having a lot more fun this year on the series," said Berman of THE NEXT GENERATION. "We did an episode where we took all our regulars and turned them into kids and cowboys and we brought Scotty back. I think there have been some very imaginative stories. We also felt there wasn't enough science fiction last season and we've tried to inject some of that."

Berman has few doubts that DEEP SPACE NINE will ultimately meet with the success that both of its progenitors have had over the years, but noted he could never have predicted the unprecedented success of THE NEXT GENERATION and his role in creating its space opera spin-off. "Getting involved in a syndicated TV series in 1987 and leaving a well-paying job at a movie studio to go to work on a science fiction sequel syndicated television



Berman on board the Enterprise, delegating some duties to keep hands-on control of the new show.

series was a big risk for me," said Berman. "I had a lot of people who told me I was nuts. But I had a feeling it was worth the risk. I am now confident DEEP SPACE NINE will be equally successful."

With THE NEXT GENERATION and DEEP SPACE NINE running concurrently, Berman hopes that the two series will be sufficiently unique to keep viewers interested. "It'll be a little different than THE NEXT GENERATION, but keep the flavor of STAR TREK

and [Gene] Roddenberry's future and at the same time have fun and develop the characters," said Berman of his goals for DEEP SPACE NINE's first year on the air. "The only way you can do what I do and what Mike [Piller] does is to take this stuff very seriously and stay very devoted to it and put in a tremendous amount of dedication. And it's hard to do that if you're not having some degree of fun. I think the key is to keep it fun and keep the actors and the directors and everyone who is making the show comfortable with one another and feeling pride in what they're doing."

DEEP SPACE NINE premieres in a changed television climate that STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION has helped to create by being the most successful first-run syndicated hour drama in television history. Its success has spawned a number of challengers including Warner Bros' BABYLON 5, Rysher Entertainment's HIGHLANDER and other would-be science fiction heavyweights including NBC's Spielberg-produced undersea format SEA QUEST. "We're the horse to chase," said Berman. "You take a look at the ratings THE NEXT GENERATION



A Lurian on the Promenade in the two-hour pilot. Berman relaxes Gene Roddenberry's dictum against weird aliens for makeup creator Michael Westmore.

has been turning out and you realize we are right now the epitome of what syndicated television should and can be and the goal of what people are after. Obviously all the new shows will be after that, including DEEP SPACE NINE. I think we're going to be hard to beat, but the right show could come along and do wonderfully."

In addition to his responsibilities in both pre- and post-production on both series, one of Berman's most profound joys has been contributing two teleplays to STAR TREK's fourth and fifth season's ("Brothers" and "A Matter of Time," respectively). Whether he'll have the chance to put pen to paper again for DEEP SPACE NINE remains to be seen. "I would love to," said Berman. "I did a tremendous amount of work on the pilot in terms of writing the bible and the story with Michael [Piller] and last year I wrote the story with Michael on 'Ensign Ro' and both of the 'Unification' episodes, but this year with both shows I tend to doubt it. Maybe I can write a story or two and pass it on to some staff people, but I'll have to wait until we have enough staff people."

Despite the grueling daily rigors of production, Berman said he plans to continue toiling in the 24th century for the foreseeable future. Even with a desk full of dailies, a stack of unreturned messages and two enormous production staffs to manage, Berman still relishes his job as the caretaker and perpetrator of the newest piece of STAR TREK mythology. "When I give birth to children," said Berman, "I stick with them." □

or producer can take those characters, that vision, and make it work. It encompasses both the grittiness that director Nicholas Meyer prefers and the Hyatt Regency approach that Gene liked in *THE NEXT GENERATION*. Now we have the bizarre, darker alien version of the stories in *DEEP SPACE NINE*."

Ironically, the name of the new *STAR TREK* series, like *THE NEXT GENERATION*, is a monicker no one really liked. "At first we had no idea if we were even going to use the title *STAR TREK*," said Berman. "It was something that [co-creator] Mike [Piller] and I decided to do and it just sort of stuck. Nine was the first number that came to mind. We wanted to give the space station a designation and we didn't want the series to have a Bajoran or Cardassian name, so we gave it a name related to Starfleet's designation for the space station. We talked about using 'The Final Frontier' and giving the space station a designation like 'Starbase 362.' Finally I came up with *DEEP SPACE NINE* and neither of us loved it, but it just sort of stuck."

Berman's complete autonomy over the *STAR TREK* universe has been ceded on *DEEP SPACE NINE*, where he shares creative control with co-creator, writer and co-executive producer Michael Piller. Berman and Piller had kicked around the idea of doing a series together and had actually mentioned the idea of a *STAR TREK* spin-off to creator Gene Roddenberry in 1991, at the end of *THE NEXT GENERATION*'s fourth season. "He said, 'Great,' and that we should talk about it sometime," recalled Berman of Roddenberry. "Unfortunately, we never did because he was not well then and he got worse and worse." Roddenberry died that October in 1991.

It was actually former Para-

“At first we had no idea if we were even going to call it *STAR TREK*. We talked about using the phrase ‘The Final Frontier.’”

— Producer Rick Berman —



Avery Brooks as station commander Benjamin Sisko and Nana Visitor as his Bajoran second-in-command, examining the station's wreckage in the series' pilot.

mount studio chief Brandon Tartikoff who got the ball rolling later that year. Tartikoff called a meeting with Berman and Paramount executive John Pike, and asked Berman to create another syndicated science fiction show for the studio. Recalled Berman, "I told Brandon that I had been working with Mike Piller on a number of ideas. It was one of those, 'Oh, and by the way, I just happen to have one right here' meetings. There was no question that the person I wanted to bring in to work on something like this was Michael, and it basically came down to two ideas we had been playing with."

According to Piller, Paramount was initially against doing another *STAR TREK* series but was eventually won over by the ideas for the proposed spin-off. The other concept Piller and Berman toyed with was a science fiction series

taking place on earth during medieval times. Given the studio greenlight, Piller and Berman spent a lot of late nights during *THE NEXT GENERATION*'s fifth season, planning the new series and writing its pilot script. Setting the new show on a space station rather than a galaxy-roving starship had nothing to do with economics, according to Berman.

"*DEEP SPACE NINE* is going to be more expensive than any show Paramount's ever done," said Berman. "You can't have two shows on the air with people on starships. We needed to come up with something new and put 24th-century people into a new environment. If you can't be in a vehicle that's taking you to where the adventure is, then you have to put yourself somewhere where the adventure comes to you."

And adventure comes, with the discovery in the pilot that the station borders the first stable wormhole ever detected in space, leading to the exploration of the unexplored gamma quadrant.

"We must have had 50 meetings before we felt comfortable with what we had come up with," said Berman. "It's grown the way a child grows from something that is young and simple to something that is more complex. The premise has never made a major left or right turn. The settings, characters and backstory have become more focused. I'm sure a year from now it will be much richer than it is today."

Ultimately, the most important aspect of the new series for the producers was making the new show less constraining in terms of allowing interpersonal conflict among its characters. "The problem with *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* is Gene [Roddenberry] created a group of characters that he purposely chose not to put into conflict," said Berman. "It's murderous to write these shows because there is no good drama without



STARFLEET DOSSIER

NAME: Benjamin Sisko
RANK: Commander, DS9
ORIGIN: Earth
STATUS: Wife killed during Borg attack on Wolf 239. Son, Jake. Posted to DS9 as commander. His coming foretold by Bajoran prophets.

Avery Brooks, the menacing, morally ambiguous strongman of ABC's *SPENCER FOR HIRE* and the short-lived *A MAN CALLED HAWK*, sports a full head of hair in *DEEP SPACE NINE* and is barely recognizable. Brooks is a fitting successor to William Shatner and Patrick Stewart, the kind of actor needed to personify the power and strength of a Starfleet commander. Like Stewart, Brooks' commands instant respect on the set, a new role model about to write a new chapter in the depiction of blacks on television.

Since Brooks played his best-known role bald and in light of Stewart's well-noted baldness, why didn't Brooks continue the tradition? "We think he looks best with hair," said producer David Livingston. "In fact, we looked at several variations of hair and we felt the one we chose was the most appealing. It was simply a cosmetic decision and had no bearing on Patrick Stewart."

Although new to *STAR TREK*, Brooks admitted to an instant affinity for the material. "Of course, I was familiar with it because I grew up watching television," said Brooks. "But I am definitely a fan now."

For Brooks, *DEEP SPACE NINE*'s approach to addressing contemporary issues is a refreshing change of pace from the mundane fare offered on network television. Brooks noted that Sisko's role as a single parent illustrates the show's topicality in addressing '90s concerns within the framework of the future. "In an allegorical way this show is very '90s," said Brooks. "We're dealing with a single parent and single parenting."

Right: Brooks, eschewing his bald-headed TV look for Sisko.



STAR TREK DEEP SPACE NINE

CASTING THE SPACE STATION ENSEMBLE

Paramount took affirmative action in filling roles with women and minorities.

By Mark Altman

The scheduled start of principal photography on August 18th made the casting of Sisko and Dax, the last roles to be filled, a race against the clock. "It's an ugly business and it's interminable and it's exhausting," said executive producer Rick Berman of the casting process. "Fortunately, we have a wonderful casting director [Junie Lowry-Johnson C.S.A]. Our star and the role of Dax were the two killers." Co-executive producer Michael Piller denied rumors that Richard Dean Anderson of *MACGYVER* was an early front runner for the lead role of Sisko.

Ultimately, Sisko was cast only days before production began. On winning the plumb assignment, Avery Brooks reportedly announced, "This is the role of my career." Brooks, best known as Hawk from ABC's *SPENCER FOR HIRE* and the short-lived spin-off *A MAN CALLED HAWK*, has also toured in a play about the life of Paul Robeson. "Patrick Stewart has a very big pair of shoes to fill," said Berman. "We needed to find someone who was different but had the same stature and the same strength and power. It was a very, very long search. We brought in people from Bel-

"Patrick Stewart was a very big pair of shoes to fill. We had to find someone who was different but who had the same power."

- Producer Rick Berman -



Siddig El Fadil as Dr. Julian Bashir, the station's youthful chief medical officer. El Fadil is Indian, born in North Africa, with British stage experience.

gium and England. We saw German actors and a lot of Americans, blacks, whites and Hispanics. Brooks was undoubtedly the best, but it was a very, very long process."

When Stewart and William Shatner were cast in *STAR TREK*, both, despite an impressive array of supporting credits, were not as well known as Brooks, who created a very recognizable visual icon during his three years playing

Hawk, slowly, malevolently, drawing "S-p-e-n-c-e-r" opposite series star Robert Urich week after week. Berman didn't feel Brooks' lack of anonymity was a liability in casting him for the role of Sisko. "There are actors I tend to stay away from because I feel they have overly familiar faces," said Berman. "But with a good actor, you don't think about how familiar they are. If they're right, they're right."

Equally difficult was the casting of Dax, the station's female Trill science officer. Originally the role was envisioned as a different kind of alien equipped with a jet-propelled wheelchair to compensate for the difference in the station's gravity from the alien's home world. Piller noted that on the station the alien would have been provided with a special office. "Out of her office she would be in the

wheelchair to move around," said Piller. "Although a character like this could possibly show up in the future, production requirements made her untenable on a regular basis and so we looked at a variety of other alien species. Of them, the Trill seemed the most interesting."

The Trill, a symbiotic coupling of two organisms, a sentient long-lived slug-like parasite, joined to humanoids

Rene Auberjonois as Odo, the station's shape-shifting security chief and Colm Meaney as Chief Miles O'Brien.

conflict and the conflict has to come from outside the group."

To bring conflict to the 24th century without violating Roddenberry's vision of Starfleet's Federation, Berman and Piller introduced non-Starfleet personnel into the mix, not governed by the same dramatic constraints. "What we wanted to do was somewhat paradoxical," said Berman. "We wanted to bring conflict but not to break away from Gene's rules. They are still of paramount importance in what we're doing. We created an environment where Starfleet officers weren't happy, a location where the people weren't all that happy to have them there. Members of our core group are not Starfleet: the security shape shifter, Odo, the Bajoran major Kira, the Ferengi bartender, Quark."

DEEP SPACE NINE's Bajoran backstory was originally developed by Berman and Piller in writing *THE NEXT GENERATION's* fifth season episode, "Ensign Ro." *DEEP SPACE NINE* makes the Bajorans a highly religious, spiritual culture, a contrast to the atheistic, secular humanism of Roddenberry's view of the Federation. "I don't think it goes against Gene," said Piller. "He's still with us. He's still on our shoulders as we think about these conceptual issues. I don't think it would bother him one bit. What he felt very

genetically bred for the purpose, was introduced in fourth season's "The Host," an outstanding NEXT GENERATION episode written by Rene Echevarria. Dax, the Trill of DEEP SPACE NINE, lives within the body of a 28-year-old female, but once knew Sisko inside a previous host, the aged body of an old man, lending a uniquely dramatic and sometimes comic veneer to the relationship. The producers finally decided on Terry Farrell (HELLRAISER III) to fill the role when they were already weeks into production on the pilot. "I was stressed to death," said Farrell of being the last actor to join the cast. "They did all my stuff in one week and I had the flu and my period and 16-hour days."

After Paramount executives reviewed the dailies of Farrell in the pilot, they issued one of their few ultimatums. The distinguishing marks on Farrell's forehead, a subtle makeup duplicating the look of the Trill as seen in "The Host," had to go, resulting in two days of reshooting. After the protracted search for a beautiful actress, the studio didn't want Farrell to be defaced by prosthetics. "There are different Klingons and now there are different Trills," joked Farrell. "Maybe I'm from the north of Trill and the other guy was from the south."

Noted Berman about the delay in casting Dax, "The most difficult role to cast is always a beautiful girl. It's hard to find one who can act, who doesn't want to bypass television and go into the movies." Part of the problem was explaining the role to those auditioning. "It was difficult to get across that Dax is a beautiful woman *and* a 400-year-old androgynous creature," said Berman.

Added Piller, "It's a character that's a little harder to define. How do we make it different from Terry Farrell? How do you make it something alien and yet accessible? It's a very interesting mix of qualities the studio wanted. We saw a lot of very talented young women, but they just didn't get it. Some would change their voices to make it sound like a man's voice coming out of a woman. It was hard. Casting



Avery Brooks as Commander Sisko and Terry Farrell as Jadzia Dax, the station's Trill science officer in "A Man Alone," the last of the ensemble to be chosen.

people will tell you that women's roles, 25-35, attractive *and* brainy, are the hardest roles to cast. It's hard to find the next Meryl Streep. It's hard to find the next Glenn Close."

Early on Piller and Berman had toyed with casting Siddig El Fadil as Sisko after Berman was impressed by his performance as King Faisal in the PBS telefilm, A DANGEROUS MAN. When it was discovered El Fadil was only in his mid-20's, he was given the role of the station's youthful medical officer, Dr. Bashir. "The one casting credit I feel I can take and am very proud of is Siddig," said Berman. "I saw him on public television and had the Paramount people in London find him. He's someone no one would have ever considered. He is, as time will tell, an extraordinary actor."

It's a testament to STAR TREK's ability to transcend ethnic and racial boundaries that an actor like El Fadil could be cast in a role patterned after the likes of a Michael J. Fox. Watching filming from the sidelines on the set when he's

not needed, rather than lounging in his trailer, El Fadil noted he didn't need to do much preparation for the role. His biggest challenge as the station's doctor has been grappling with TREK's dreaded technobabble. "They have a sadistic love of it," said El Fadil. "But I actually quite enjoy it. It's the nearest thing to Shakespeare, stretching your mind to get your tongue around it and make sense of it without making it sound flat. That's part of the lie of trying to make it sound like I'm actually a doctor or science officer. Data on THE NEXT GENERATION is unbelievable because he does it so flawlessly."

Piller and Berman also toyed with making the commander a woman. "One consideration was that Sisko, the star of the show, would be a woman," said Piller. "That would have been an advancement for television, but we moved in a different direction." That direction was to transfer Ensign Ro, Michelle Forbes' ballsy NEXT GENERATION Bajoran, over to

DEEP SPACE NINE. When Forbes demurred, the role was refashioned as Bajoran Major Kira Nerys, the station's second-in-command, a plumb role won by Nana Visitor.

On the set, Visitor noted that the role's strength of character was what immediately appealed to her. "This script jumped out from among all the other silly sitcoms and weirdo things of the season," said Visitor. "All I saw was this incredibly strong woman, great writing and emotionally connected scenes."

Visitor, fresh from a stint at motherhood, has found the role of an action hero wearying. "They are long days," said Visitor. "We're all finding our sea legs with 16-hour days. I have a six month-old baby and I'm just figuring out how to see him and do this. It's not impossible, but you have to be creative. My husband brings him at lunch sometimes. It's kind of interesting to go and yell at Sisko and then come back and say, 'Come on, it's apricots and tapioca.'"

Rounding out the cast of DEEP SPACE NINE—with the exception of 14-year-old Cirroc Lofton, who plays Sisko's son Jake—are actors with STAR TREK experience. Colm Meaney as Chief Miles O'Brien moved over from THE NEXT GENERATION. Armin Shimerman, who plays Quark, the Ferengi bartender, was the actor who helped introduce the aliens in "The Last Outpost." Shimerman noted that his only competition for the role was fellow Ferengi alumnus Max Grodanchik. And to play Odo, the station's shape-shifting security chief, casting reached over to the movie series to select Rene Auberjonois, who had a role—albeit one that was cut—in STAR TREK VI.

Auberjonois, a veteran of television's long-running sitcom, BENSON, noted that the chemistry between the cast, both as characters and actors, developed quickly. "It always amazes me how quickly that happens," said Auberjonois. "You go on location for 10 weeks to make a film and make lifelong friendships. And it's happening here. Because of the nature of the world of DEEP SPACE NINE, a space station, there's a sense of community." □



STARFLEET DOSSIER

NAME: Quark
RANK: Civilian
ORIGIN: Ferengi Homeworld
STATUS: Proprietor of Promenade bar and gambling casino.

Armin Shimerman is no stranger to the Ferengi. Having pioneered the weasly role of a Ferengi in "The Last Outpost," the first season *NEXT GENERATION* episode that introduced the race, Shimerman was a natural choice for the role of Quark in *DEEP SPACE NINE*. A veteran of such series as *BROOKLYN BRIDGE* and *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*, Shimerman has also appeared in the films *BLIND DATE*, *LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON* and *DEATH WARRANT*.

"They remembered me from five years ago as one of the first Ferengi," said Shimerman on the set. "Rick [Berman] said they remembered how strong a Ferengi I was. They wanted that for Quark, to have him play chess with Sisko." The actor was quick to contrast his new character with previous Ferengi incarnations.

"The Ferengi have always seemed to be very broad and on the verge of slapstick," said Shimerman, straining to hear through his huge Ferengi ears which ironically impair his hearing rather than help it. "I would like to reel that in a little.

On the other hand, that is what they've established so I must include that as well. Quark is libidinous. Quark is avaricious. He's ambitious and Quark is short. The humor will come from all those things."

Shimerman admitted to a degree of frustration about working under the prosthetics. "I think every actor would prefer if all of his face was shown," said Shimerman. "I would be a fool to say otherwise, but I think the mask works really well, combined with whatever inflections I can give to my voice and my eyes. It means working a little harder and being a little bit 'bigger.'"

Right: Armin Shimerman as Quark, assimilating the Ferengi.

strongly about is that humans, and to some degree Federation members, had a humanistic attitude of logic and reality. His humans do not overtly celebrate religious beliefs.

"What we have done in creating an environment that will bring conflict to our people, which we want desperately to do, was put them with a group of aliens who are different. Giving the Bajorans a strong spiritual, mystical orb and prophet worship forces our people to deal with another alien race that is as different from us as are the Klingons. Gene would be the first to tell you it doesn't matter how hideous an alien race seemed to be, there are no bad aliens. Each has a culture that must be recognized and appreciated. We're not changing Gene's vision of what humanity is in the 24th century, we're simply showing how we are affected by conflict with the Bajorans."

Berman noted that the experience of creating *DEEP SPACE NINE* was considerably easier than when he and *STAR TREK* creator Gene Roddenberry first generated *THE NEXT GENERATION*. "Gene had to create a new television show from 25 years of mythology that had grown up over an old one, and he had to do it all out of whole cloth," said Berman, reflecting on the birth of *THE NEXT GENERATION* and the problems inherent in reviving the *STAR TREK* franchise for television. "In the case of *DEEP SPACE NINE*, it's much easier for me than it was for Gene because the new show is being produced mostly by the people who have been on *STAR TREK* for the last five years, who understand it and understand what it's like to write a stylized 24th century script. They know what words can be spoken and what words can't and how to go about all of the things we do to create this television show.

"He also had a lot of people who felt they knew more about *STAR TREK* than he did,"

"We're not changing Gene [Roddenberry]'s vision of humanity in the 24th century. We created an environment that brings conflict."

- Producer Michael Piller -



Nerys (Nana Visitor) and Bashir (Siddiq El Fadil) cradle Tahna (Jeff Nordling) in "Past Prologue," as Nerys goes undercover to spy on the Bajorans.

continued Berman about Roddenberry's trials in launching *THE NEXT GENERATION*. "He had to get pretty tough about it. We had a group of writers who didn't have the benefit of someone as strong as Mike Piller. People had no idea what *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* was going to be about. Gene felt the obsessive necessity to put his own print on everything to get the show going, and I applaud him for that. By the time I was in control of the series, in the second year, Gene had pretty much cemented his idea of what the show was going to be about and it was my job to continue, to keep it going and not to formulate it, because he had done that."

Though Berman credited his "Encounter at Farpoint" experience in helping to launch *DEEP SPACE NINE*, no lessons were to be learned from studying Roddenberry's pilots

for the original *STAR TREK*. "I'll tell you something that I've never told anybody," said Berman. "I've never seen 'The Cage' [classic *TREK*'s original pilot]. I've seen little pieces of it. I don't think I've seen 10 episodes of the original *STAR TREK* series, which is funny because Leonard Nimoy is a very close friend of mine, and DeForest Kelley is a very close friend who lives across the street. I was in college when they ran and I never watched most of them. It's funny because my 10-year-old son now watches them all the time and occasionally he'll grab me and sit me down and I'll look at my buddies when they were 25 years younger." The irony of Berman's remark is that the tone of "Emissary," *DEEP SPACE NINE*'s pilot in which Sisko encounters a race of aliens who cannot understand linear existence, forcing the commander to experience his best and worst memories, is far closer to that of "The Cage" than "Encounter at Farpoint."

Once the series' premise had been set in place by Berman and Piller, Piller wrote the pilot script. Berman noted that he was enthusiastic about Piller's first draft, but that the writer was unsatisfied with his own work. "Michael's never liked anything he's written," said Berman. "The story was 40 pages long and extremely well defined when Michael sat down to write the teleplay. He wrote a first draft and then he and I spent about a month more working on it. We discussed it, made changes, draft after draft. Finally we got it to a point where we were pretty happy with it. No one had seen it except for us. As is typical for Michael, he was frustrated and felt that something wasn't working. He did a rewrite that was not a major rewrite at all, that brought into it ideas that we had discussed all along that had to do with the Los Angeles

STAR TREK DEEP SPACE NINE

MICHAEL PILLER, SERIES CO-CREATOR

Berman's write-hand man, scripting chief at both ends of the final frontier.

By Mark A. Altman

When Michael Piller took over the writing staff of STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION third season he could hardly have expected to find himself as the helmsman and co-creator of an even newer generation of STAR TREK three years later. So many had been in his spot and departed before him. But by the end of the third season, the last truly turbulent year on THE NEXT GENERATION, Piller had completely transformed the show's story generation process and helped cement its dramatic tone, paving the way for the successful seasons that followed.

On DEEP SPACE NINE, Piller shares equal responsibility with boss and co-creator Rick Berman in supervising of the show. Piller readily admitted, however, that he expects their working relationship to remain similar to the successful arrangement they have had on THE NEXT GENERATION. "I am a writer," said Piller. "I live in a world of imagination. Just ask my wife. I depend enormously on Rick's intuitions and his talents in production and I know Rick depends a great deal on [designer] Herman [Zimmerman]'s in the look of the show. I am there as another voice, thinking, offering my best wisdom and counsel."

Piller described the difference in his working relationship with Berman on DEEP SPACE NINE succinctly. "The bottom line is that I work for Rick on THE NEXT GENERATION and I work *with* Rick on DEEP SPACE NINE. Our working relationship is virtually identical except that when a decision of critical importance has to be made, we really reach a consensus. On DEEP SPACE NINE sometimes I win and sometimes he wins ... he always wins on THE

NEXT GENERATION."

In examining the first few months of production on DEEP SPACE NINE, Piller is pleased with the course the show has taken. "It's been a blessed project," said Piller. "I hope the blessings continue. We wrote a story, the studio loved it. I wrote a script and everybody seemed to love it. We cast a group of actors that are delightful. Colm Meaney told Rick [Berman] that he hasn't worked with a group of actors this fine since he was in the Abbey. I was able to hire [writer] Ira Behr as my key man in my plan to be able to execute this show. [Writer] Peter [Allen Fields] came over from THE NEXT GENERATION as the one tool that I was willing to steal from THE NEXT GENERATION. Rick and I support each other marvelously and we care a great deal about what we're doing, and the studio couldn't be more supportive. I'm the guy who's always sort of looking over his shoulder for the footsteps and I haven't heard them yet."

Though Piller has removed himself from the day-to-day production chores on THE NEXT GENERATION, he is still responsible for overseeing its script development, working with executive pro-

Avery Brooks as Sisko, in Piller's pilot interlude with son Cirroc Lofton that recalls Gene Roddenberry's writing for "The Cage," STAR TREK's original pilot.



Piller on the Borg ship of "Q-Who," after joining STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION third season in 1989, co-wrote the new series' pilot with Berman.

ducer Jeri Taylor. But Piller's main focus is coming up with 18 scripts to fill out DEEP SPACE NINE's first half-season. According to Piller it's easier to come up with plotlines for DEEP SPACE NINE than for THE NEXT GENERATION. "We can still get into a Runabout and go anywhere we want," said Piller of the station's mini-starships, which take the crew through a neighboring wormhole into the unexplored Gamma quadrant.

Piller admitted that writing the series' pilot, "Emissary," he was influenced by the THE NEXT GENERATION pilot "Encounter at Farpoint," as well as STAR TREK's original pilot, "The Cage." The influence of the latter is ironic since Piller does not have a strong affinity for the "classic" series. Noted Piller, "I haven't

seen 'The Cage' in three or four years, but what brings to mind the memory of it is the imagination that takes you out of the locked cage, into green fields on the picnic, Gene [Roddenberry]'s imagination. Those are wonderful moments and I would be lying if I did not say that image was with me when I wrote this script. I think it's definitely inspired by Roddenberry and if people who have missed something in the new STAR TREK feel that some funny bone is being tickled in the new series, I know Rick and I will be delighted." □

STAR TREK DEEP SPACE NINE

FILMING ON THE NEW FRONTIER

Massive, multi-level, movie quality sets make filming on the Enterprise seem easy.

By Mark Altman

DEEP SPACE NINE, like THE NEXT GENERATION, shoots on three soundstages on the Paramount lot, occasionally venturing off the studio grounds for location shooting. "It's a space station that's in a way smaller than the *Enterprise*," said production designer Herman Zimmerman. "It occupies a larger volume of space but the actual structure is mostly that—space. It has the sense of being more enclosed except for the Promenade, which is a larger stage. It's more like the interior of a submarine, a nice atomic submarine, mind you, but a submarine nonetheless."

Ankling THE NEXT GENERATION to take over as director of photography of DEEP SPACE NINE was three-year TREK veteran, Marvin Rush. Taking over behind the camera of THE NEXT GENERATION is Jonathan West, hired by David Livingston. "I was given his reel, took one look at it and said, this is him," said Livingston. "It was a seamless transition and we're thrilled to have him. The shows are indicative of what a good director of photography he is."

Due to Paramount's unprecedented success with THE NEXT GENERATION, the

"You can very much lose yourself, cross over into the fantasy. You're there and it's real. It's very easy to do on these sets."

- Actress Nana Visitor -



Producer David Livingston, in charge of the physical production of both STAR TREKs, amid a starfield on THE NEXT GENERATION.

studio has been less restrictive on the purse strings in financing the start-up of the new show, allowing Zimmerman and his team the luxury of creating exciting visual motifs for DEEP SPACE NINE. "I'm very impressed with the amount of money they're spending on the aliens and the special effects," said director Paul Lynch, who helmed early episodes "Past Perfect" and "Ba-

problems for the directors and production craftspeople. "For a television series, the problems that we've created for the cinematographer are fairly difficult challenges," said Zimmerman. "These sets are built more along the lines of feature film sets than television sets."

Supervising producer David Livingston, in charge of bringing in DEEP SPACE NINE on schedule and on budget, never-

bel." "In the two shows I'm doing, there's a lot more effects that anything I've ever done on STAR TREK. This has got so much more going for it. It's a much more interesting set. There are so many different things happening on this space station. On THE NEXT GENERATION, the sets are basically the same each episode: the Captain's quarters, the bridge, the meeting room, the medical bay. Here, because it's such a big space station, there are all sorts of things in it."

One of the most noticeable departures DEEP SPACE NINE has made from established STAR TREK production design is its use of multi-level sets on two of the three soundstages. The operation's center exists on several raised platforms, and the Promenade and Quark's bar are built several stories up. The sets are visually stunning, but they create unique



Nana Visitor as Bajoran Major Kira Nerys, overlooks the Promenade.

riots, the idea of people rebuilding, of people living in an area that had been damaged and violated and the spirit that goes into the rebuilding. It was a good change, but not a major change. Most importantly, it was a change that made Michael happy."

In contrasting their two personalities, Berman characterized Piller as more introspective and self-critical. "Michael's tougher on himself than I am," said Berman. "We rarely disagree on script points. We spend a lot of time with writers making scripts work after first drafts come in. I rarely disagree with him in terms of casting and in terms of production."

Piller's teleplay was completed weeks before production began last August, but shooting the pilot proved an incredibly arduous affair complicated by delays in casting and set construction which made it arguably even more difficult than filming "Encounter at Farpoint" six years earlier. "The pilot was hard," said producer David Livingston of DEEP SPACE NINE. Livingston was a veteran of THE NEXT GENERATION's two-hour opener, originally hired by Roddenberry associate Robert Justman as unit production manager. "I had the same anxieties and hesitation about even wanting to do it because I knew what a struggle



Filming Visitor on the upper deck of the Promenade with a camera crane and dolly. The station's Bajoran architecture consists of custom-made vacuform plastic parts.

theless encouraged the use of the more expensive sets. "When we had our initial meetings I pointed out that these sets would be difficult to shoot," said Livingston. "Ultimately, my recommendation was let's go for it and the directors will just have to figure out how to do it. They cannot shoot the show the same way THE NEXT GENERATION is shot. The bridge on THE NEXT GENERATION is called the TWA waiting lounge. You can move the camera around with great fluidity and get from point A to point B easily. You can't do that in ops.

"The Promenade has a whole second story that you have to climb up to shoot in—but it looks great when you go up there. Quark's bar is certainly not Ten Forward. It's a lot more complicated and difficult to shoot in. A lot of the sets are smaller and more cramped because that's the nature of the beast here. It presents opportunities and challenges for the director to pull it off in terms of the schedule but I think it's going to add a visual dynamic that is in strong contrast to THE NEXT GENERATION."

Camera cranes have been used to shoot the sets of DEEP SPACE NINE, a technique

used infrequently on THE NEXT GENERATION. "We've put the camera on the end of a crane with a remote control head called a 'hothead'," said Livingston. "The camera operator sits in a chair and is tied by the remote and a wire to the camera, which moves by itself. That can be used for ops and on the Promenade. Its use is limited because of the production time it takes, but I think you will see a lot more swooping cameras on this show."

Other changes from standard operating procedure on THE NEXT GENERATION include an increased reliance on computer-generated graphics for scientific and monitor displays. The operations cen-

ter is filled with video display screens. "Before, the state of the art wasn't up to converting 30-frame video to 24-frame film," said Zimmerman. "Now we have a very reliable system for reducing video to 24 frames so it can be photographed. That's a big technical advantage. We have computer-generated graphics on video monitors and spent somewhere close to \$45,000 just on the video monitors for the various sets. We have something like 64 video screens in various places on the three stages."

The infamous "Holosuites" on Stage 17 are designed for the 24th century's version of safe sex, something we always suspected was going on inside the

Enterprise's Holodeck anyway. "They are like the Holodeck of THE NEXT GENERATION," said Zimmerman. "You can program any kind of experience for any kind of location. On DEEP SPACE NINE we show the machinery that runs it. When we did THE NEXT GENERATION, budget constraints forced us to do a set with a wireframe look, a grid of squares, when the Holodeck is not activated, a black void with a yellow grid. In the station's Cardassian Holodeck, when the lights go off, so to speak, you see the machinery that creates the imagery. It's a step forward for us and it's something we've always wanted to do on THE NEXT GENERATION and were never able to achieve."

Nana Visitor, who plays second-in-command Kira Nerys, noted that you don't need a Holodeck to convince yourself that illusions are being created on Stage 17. "You can very much lose yourself into it," said Visitor. "There's that slight edge of insanity, which I don't know if all actors have, where you cross over into the fantasy and you're there and this is really happening. It's very easy to do on DEEP SPACE NINE, on these sets." □

David Carson (l) directs Rene Auberjonois as security chief Odo while Terry Farrell as Dax, gets a makeup touch-up, filming "Emissary," the show's pilot.



STAR TREK DEEP SPACE NINE

VISITOR ON BOARD

Ensign Ro goes Hollywood and a Bajoran Major steps into the breach.

By Mark Altman

Time and time again stars of the small screen have been lured into foolishness by the promise of big-screen stardom. Remember MacLean Stevenson who left M*A*S*H as Colonel Henry Blake only to become a trivia question at parties and the star of a number of short-lived and barely watched series such as HELLO, LARRY? Another equally ill-advised departure was Denise Crosby's from STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION during its freshman

year to pursue a feature career when she decried the lack of character development her role had received only to come back years later with insipid ideas for the producers on how to revive her character in the short-lived Sela debacle of TREK's fifth season. Crosby's career plans led to such memorable roles as that of a wicked policewoman masturbating on a billy club in Zalman King's RED SHOE DIARIES.

The latest TREK casualty is Michelle Forbes, who would rather take her best shot at succeeding on the big screen than settle into the security of a STAR TREK role for life. Forbes turned down the opportunity to shuttle her recurring Ensign Ro character from THE NEXT GENERATION over to DEEP SPACE NINE as one of the stars of the new series. Although Forbes' signing onto the fledgling TREK spin-off was reported as all but a *fait accompli* in many magazines, including this one, in fact, Forbes, who stars in the upcoming Dominic Sena feature KALIFORNIA for Propaganda Films, rebuffed overtures from the TREK producing team of Michael Piller and Rick Berman to beam aboard DEEP SPACE NINE. Forbes' choice to pursue a career as a movie actress resulted in some



Michelle Forbes as Ensign Ro, on board the Enterprise between feature film assignments.

quick rewriting by Piller for the series opener which had been written to include Forbes as Commander Benjamin Sisko's second-in-command.

"Michelle Forbes is a wonderful actress and her character of Ensign Ro created the entire canvas for this new series," said Piller of the character he and Berman created for THE NEXT GENERATION's fifth season episode "Ensign Ro," about a Bajoran Starfleet officer who assists Picard in exposing a Federation and Cardassian plot. "It had always been assumed that

she would be one of the people spun off and moved over to the new series. It wasn't part of the plan when the character was created. When we showed the pilot script to Michelle she said, 'It's a great script, but I really don't want to commit to a long-term deal. I don't want to be in a series.'"

Reportedly, Paramount has locked their DEEP SPACE NINE cast into seven-year commitments for the new series to avoid the costly renegotiations which resulted when THE NEXT GENERATION became a smash hit. But Forbes balked at putting her feature film career on hold. "She didn't really want to be in THE NEXT GENERATION this year either," said Piller of the actress who finally agreed to remain aboard the *Enterprise* for several more voyages. "She had a feature she had just started and she wants to be a feature actress. She said she would be delighted to be a recurring character, but she didn't want to be a regular. We could not go into the new series that way. For a long time, Rick and I talked about seeing if we could talk her into doing a year and we'll kill her at the end of the year. But then we decided that we weren't going to have the audience make an emotional investment and then lose her at the end of the year. We decided we would write her out



Nana Visitor, cast as Major Kira Nerys, second-in-command on Deep Space Nine, replaced Michelle Forbes as Ensign Ro, who passed on doing the series.

after giving her one last chance. She passed."

Fortunately, Forbes' departure from the series' plans came at the same time Piller was already working on a rewrite of the show to strengthen its first act, which meant changing the character of Ro to Kira, another Bajoran with a new and different backstory. Piller soon discovered his casting problem to be an advantage rather than a disadvantage for the new series. "I found there was a great deal more conflict in having the Bajoran not be from Starfleet," said Piller. "Immediately you have different priorities and agendas and conflict the moment Starfleet steps onto the station. The conflict between Sisko and Ro would have been much different because ultimately she's Starfleet and has to do what the boss says. Kira can do things which are not appropriate Starfleet behavior. It was really a matter of rewriting two or three scenes that defined where she was from and a couple of speeches in other scenes which were mostly action-type scenes."

Once the character was on the page, it was up to Piller and Berman, with the help of casting director Junie Lowry-Johnson, to find Nana Visitor, just the right actress to bring Kira to life. Forbes, in only a handful of appearances had become one of THE NEXT GENERATION's most popular characters and would be a hard act to follow. Piller felt Visitor was up to the challenge. "We went through a very long casting process and saw some very interesting actresses," said Piller. "Then Nana came in and just nailed it. Bang!" □

it was going to be. We had all forgotten what that was like. 'We've had the life of Riley here for five years and it's all going to change,' I said, and it did." Livingston credited newly hired production manager Bob Della Santina with taking most of the heat.

Although most of the cast was lined up before production began, late casting of the role of Sisko as well as that of Dax, weeks into shooting on the pilot, made it extremely difficult for some department heads. "They cast early, but we couldn't get them until one week before the show started shooting," noted costume designer Robert Blackman. "We build in order of the shooting schedule, since everything is made to order. But the shooting schedule started changing when they didn't have Dax cast. The more they would pull stuff up from the fifth week of shooting and stick it into the first week, the more you're completely unprepared. It was amazing we pulled it off."

Avery Brooks, who won the coveted role of Sisko, relaxed on the set in his elevated chair on Stage 4, next to the operations center and a table full of awful California bagels and juice. Confined to three soundstages on the Paramount lot, Brooks found shooting DEEP SPACE NINE a far cry from the location work in Boston and Washington, D.C. on SPENCER FOR HIRE and A MAN CALLED HAWK. "When you're moving around on location you work 14-16 hours a day," said Brooks. "It's a different kind of rhythm. Working inside requires that you not lose your energy or your focus or your concentration. After 12 or 13 hours your body wants to go home. The pilot was particularly difficult. Of course, now I can't blame my performance on the weather."

Production designer Her-

“I'm proud that I was the guy who basically bugged Roddenberry into realizing that Patrick [Stewart] was the best Picard.”

- Producer Rick Berman -



Field of dreams: Avery Brooks as Commander Sisko reliving fond memories in "Emissary," his mind probed by aliens who want to understand humans.

man Zimmerman suggested that the new STAR TREK ensemble is more faithful to Roddenberry's original hopes for STAR TREK before the casting of William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy turned the show into a star vehicle. "If you want to go back to Mr. Roddenberry's original ideas, he wanted to create an ensemble cast, but because of the really strong ability of Bill Shatner and Leonard Nimoy and the romance of those characters and the relationships between each other and Dr. McCoy, it became more of a star cast than an ensemble cast. On THE NEXT GENERATION Gene achieved what he was really striving for in the first place. He has the strength of Picard in Patrick Stewart, but he has a very level, competent cast all the way through. I think he was more pleased than he was the first time around with the casting of THE NEXT GENER-

ATION."

Before his death, Roddenberry went on record that he was the only one who could cast STAR TREK. Countered Berman, "I don't think that's the case. I was very involved with the original casting on [THE NEXT GENERATION] and if I could pride myself on any casting coup, it had to do with Patrick Stewart. Bob [Justman] discovered Stewart and brought him to the attention of Roddenberry and Roddenberry said, 'No!' I met Stewart and said to Bob Justman, 'We have to convince Gene to use this guy,' and Bob said to me, 'We can't. When Gene makes up his mind, it's a waste of time to try and change it.' But in my case, ignorance was bliss. I didn't believe that and I was the guy who basically bugged Gene into realizing that Patrick was the best Picard."

Roddenberry's first choice for the role of the Enterprise captain in THE NEXT GENERATION was CAGNEY & LACEY's Stephen Macht.

"As far as the other characters, they were far more the selection of Justman and mine than they were of anybody else," said Berman. "Gene basically approved, like the studio did, the people that Bob and I chose, and he was not all that involved in it. He was very stubborn about who he wanted for Picard and in the case of Marina Sirtis and Denise Crosby, we selected them for the opposite roles, and he said, 'I want Crosby to play Tasha and I want Marina to play Troi.' That was his idea. Frakes was my choice. He liked Frakes, but his first choice was Bill Campbell [ROCKETEER, CRIME STORY]. Gene liked him and we brought him in to see [Paramount executive] John Pike, who said no. The next person we chose was Frakes. He felt very strongly about what he wanted Frakes to be, but he was never very stubborn about the casting."

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STARFLEET DOSSIER

NAME: Julian Bashir
RANK: Doctor/Lt. JG, DS9
ORIGIN: Earth
STATUS: Graduated second in his class from Starfleet medical.

Not since Wil Wheaton prowled the sets of THE NEXT GENERATION first season with gleeful abandon, has STAR TREK been witness to the vibrant and unabashed energy and enthusiasm of an actor like Siddig El Fadil. Cast in the role of Dr. Julian Bashir (originally, Julian Amros), the 26-year-old Londoner has starred on stage in productions such as BROTHER EICHMANN and SINBAD, THE SAILOR. Bashir is characterized in the pilot's script as requesting posting on Deep Space Nine because the frontier "is where heroes are made."

El Fadil noted that he's not fearful of comparisons with previous STAR TREK doctors since his character is so dramatically different from the roles which have preceded him. "I've seen the other shows, but they're such different people than I am," said El Fadil. "They've gone for someone younger. He's more naive. He's not burdened with anything except for the novelty of everything he sees and how best to negotiate it. It completely mirrors my own experience. Jumping around and being overenthusiastic comes very naturally to me."

Executive producer Rick Berman spotted El Fadil on PBS. "He just jumped off the screen," said co-executive producer Michael Piller. "Our casting people in Europe found him. There was not another doctor candidate. He was just delightful."

The spin on El Fadil from the show's publicist is that female viewers will "swoon over his Johnny Mathis good looks." Noted writer/producer Ira Steven Behr, "I think Siddig is going to go through the roof. He's fun and he's got energy."

Right: Heartthrob Siddig El Fadil as medical officer Dr. Bashir.



STAR TREK

DEEP SPACE NINE

HERMAN ZIMMERMAN, PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Zimmerman employed a feature film budget to build a new universe in stunning detail.

By Mark Altman

DEEP SPACE NINE production designer Herman Zimmerman is no stranger to STAR TREK, having designed THE NEXT GENERATION's first season as well as the STAR TREK features V: THE FINAL FRONTIER and VI: THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY. Zimmerman was more than willing to return to the rigors of episodic television after nearly five years, when called on by executive producer Rick Berman. "Television's not a step down," said Zimmerman, who spent over \$2 million on the sets for DEEP SPACE NINE's pilot, more money than was allocated for the sets of STAR TREK VI. "Wherever the design challenges are, is where I'd like to be. There are certainly a lot more science fiction television shows than there are science fiction features to work on these days."

Unlike his early work on THE NEXT GENERATION for which Zimmerman updated the established sets of the original series and the feature films, the space station of DEEP SPACE NINE was a blank slate, forcing the designer to envision totally new STAR TREK concepts. "At first, Berman and [executive producer

"Our Starfleet people never feel exactly at home. They're always aware of the alien environment in which they're working."

- Herman Zimmerman -



Zimmerman (l), on the set with director of photography Marvin Rush, architects of the new series' gritty, alien high-tech look.

Michael] Piller thought the station should be falling apart and in a very bad state of disrepair, showing the effects of time and neglect," recalled Zimmerman. "But as we started developing the sketches for what that kind of a station would look like, none of us liked it. We were saying to ourselves, 'This is space, the final frontier, 400 years in the future and we should be as high tech and slick

and believable in scientific terms as possible.' We did a fairly sharp about-face and went to another concept."

Since DEEP SPACE NINE's station was built by the Cardassians using Bajoran slave labor, for use in strip mining Bajora of its precious mineral resources, it was decided the design of the station would be inspired by the look of the Cardassians themselves, as seen on THE NEXT GENERATION. "Bob Blackman's costumes showed a kind of a chestplate armor that looked like a crustacean," recalled Zimmerman. "Taking off from that very fundamental idea, we decided the Cardassians like structure and they'd like to see the structure on the outside instead of hiding it inside the walls. The station itself and all the exterior sets are designed so that you can see the support columns and beams."

Although Zimmerman's deconstructionist approach to the architecture of DEEP SPACE NINE was a very different look for STAR TREK, he feels it's still true to the established streamlined look of the TREK universe. "It's streamlined in a different way," said Zimmerman. "It's a design that is at the same time honest and a little bit awesome because of the size of the beams that support every-

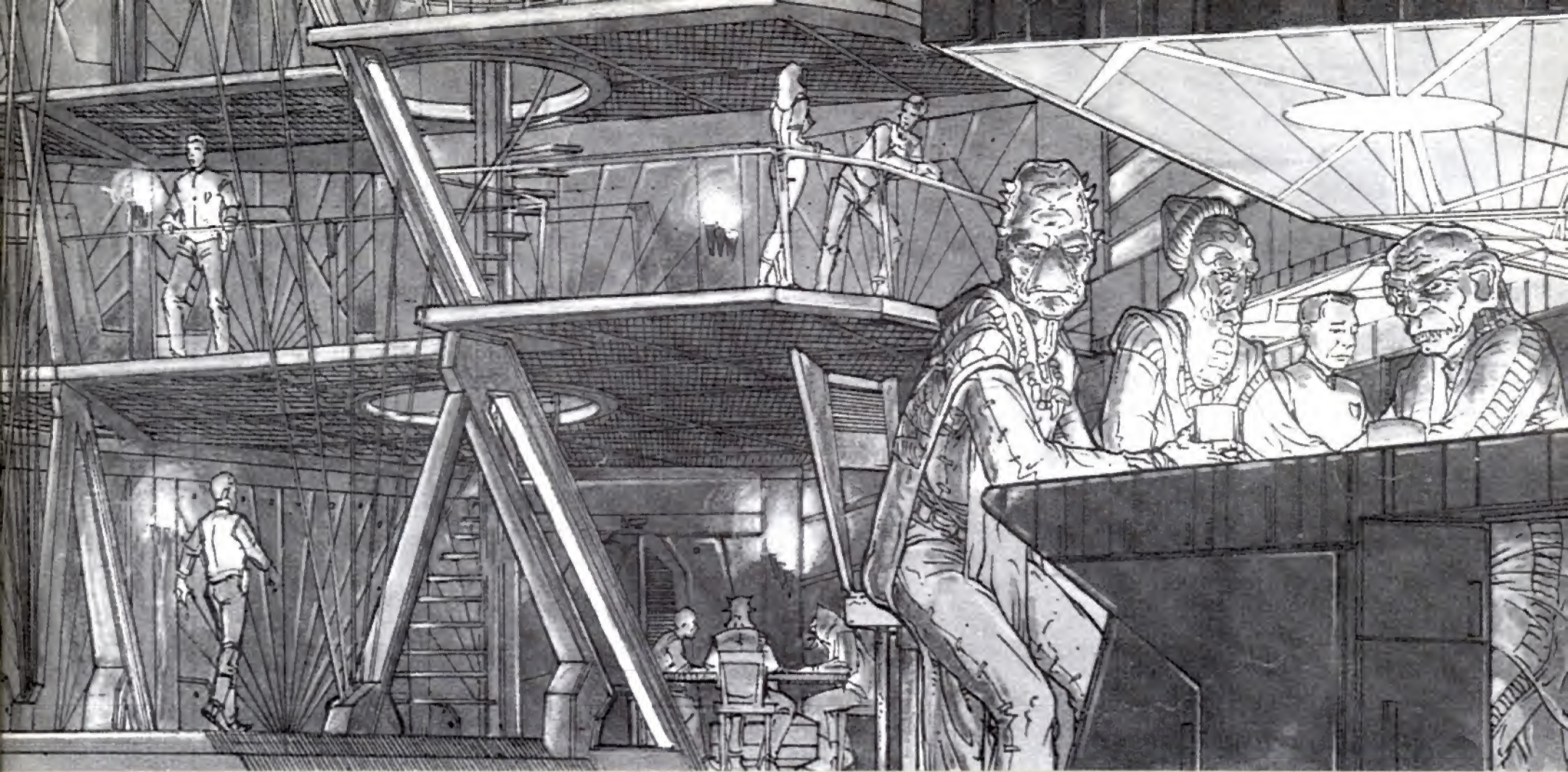


Is this STAR TREK or STAR WARS?

thing. The size of the windows, the shapes of the doorways and the way the doors operate are all very intimidating. They're not user friendly in the way that THE NEXT GENERATION sets are user friendly. That was intentional. The idea of the creators of the series was that our Starfleet people would never feel exactly at home. They would never be terribly comfortable, always aware of the alien environment in which they were working."

In order to realize the alien Cardassian look of the station, Zimmerman used fiberglass molds to duplicate panels and features that he wouldn't normally be able to replicate on a limited budget. "We have created an architecture that will be seen to be unique," said Zimmerman. "We have made all these fantastic shapes in fiberglass and can repeat them fairly inexpensively."

When STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION was being assembled, Zimmerman recalled that Gene Roddenberry insisted on creating a new viewscreen that would dominate the foreground of the bridge where the images projected on the monitor would dwarf the crew. Used effectively in "Encounter at Farpoint," Picard addressed a menacing Q towering above



Production illustrator Richard Delgado's concept for the Deep Space Nine bar, scaled-down for filming, a combination of wide-open and claustrophobic spaces.

him on the huge screen. For DEEP SPACE NINE, it was decided that an even more impressive viewscreen would be needed in the operations center control room. Zimmerman envisioned a huge monitor, viewed from both sides, that appears whenever an image is called up by one of the operations officers.

"There are a lot of things which are new to STAR TREK viewers which we hope they'll like, and one of them is the viewscreen," said Zimmerman. "There isn't always a picture of the stars in space as there is on a starship. There will be times when the viewscreen is turned off and we'll see the image disappear and the cam-

era will move in on the people who have been watching it, which is an interesting, rather innovative, photographic technique. The effect is done as a burn-in in post-production. Unfortunately, the viewscreen material can't be pre-produced ahead of shooting because of the way the schedules are so compressed.

"We put a ring of neon around it that fuzzes the edge a little bit. It gives the look of the image on the screen a slightly different edge and that makes it more alien looking. We shoot that footage during principal photography and it's inserted in post-production. We shoot it green screen because we use blue neon to surround the

screen. You can key off of any saturated color."

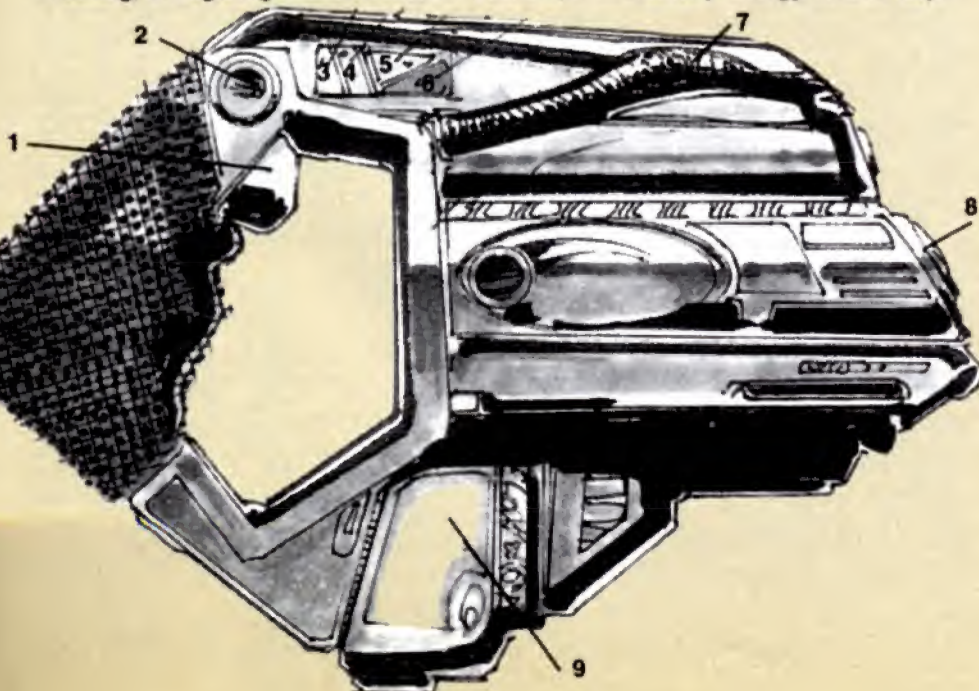
Another improvement over the familiar NEXT GENERATION technology is the use of a turbo-lift on the bridge which actually can be seen descending and ascending as it transports officers to the heart of the station, the operations center. "The general consensus was we were competing with ourselves because THE NEXT GENERATION is a terribly successful show," said Zimmerman. "The idea of STAR TREK is one that has captured the imagination of television audiences all over the world and we had to do something that was at least as interesting and hopefully more interesting. We were intent on making a dynamic place for the operations center. Unlike the bridge of a starship, the operations center doesn't go anywhere. The station first orbits a planet and then it's moved near a wormhole. One of the things I've always wanted to do was have the turbo-lifts actually come into a room and leave a room and we were able to do that. We only had a certain amount of space under the stage that we could work with so one of the criteria for raising a platform was to gain an extra few feet to operate these elevator mechanisms. We do see the actors come up out of the stage

floor and that proves to be very effective.

"On other sets that isn't possible so we just see the elevator doors open as we do in THE NEXT GENERATION. The Cardassians are a militaristic people and they prefer to command from a high point, as any general would, so we placed the commander's office on the upper level of the operations center to give him a vantage point. There are windows in the doors and windows on the sides of the doors and in the commander's office so he can be watching whatever is going on in the operations center. It's a combination of transporter room and engineering area that we would find on another level on the *Enterprise*. It also has a science area and a large conference room with a planning table."

Zimmerman was reluctant to assess his design work on the new show so early in the season, but had this reflection. "I thought it might be fun to do this without the encumbrance of the design criteria I had to stick to when we designed THE NEXT GENERATION, to have a whole clean culture and design challenge, to just start from scratch. It's been about the hardest thing I've ever done, but I was right—it's also been the most fun." □

Delgado's sketch of the Bajoran phaser (clockwise, left): 1-trigger; 2-lock; 3-beam, width up; 4-beam, intensity up; 5-beam, width down; 6-beam, intensity down; 7-tubing, 8-targeting assist; 8-emitter window; 9-secondary energy source clip.





STARFLEET DOSSIER

NAME: Jadzia Dax
RANK: Lieutenant/Science Officer, DS9
ORIGIN: Trill
STATUS: The Trill, a joined species, are comprised of two separate but interdependent entities: a humanoid host and a slug-like symbiont intelligence. Dax's symbiont is over 350 years old, in the body of a young female host.

"I hate the word passive," said actress Terry Farrell who plays Trill science officer, Jadzia Dax. Farrell reclined in her trailer on the Paramount lot, describing the character she portrays. "I think she's quietly passionate, exceedingly passionate."

Whether or not Farrell's serious is difficult to discern. The quick-witted and stunningly beautiful actress is still trying to keep up with the turn of events that propelled her into a leading role on television's biggest, most expensive show, playing an alien with a worm inside of her. Farrell won the part after an extensive casting search thanks to an audition in which she played the role with an amused detachment rather than attempting to personify a woman with, as Farrell put it, a short, fat snake inside.

Noted Farrell of Dax, "I think she has fun with people. In the scene I had to

audition, I used to be an old man. I felt Avery [Brooks as Sisko] would expect to see me in that context. He had never seen me before as a woman. How else do you play that other than to have fun with somebody. It would be fun if you dressed up in make-

up and the other person doesn't know you're fooling them. They're trying to believe you're who you say you are, but you don't look like you did last week. Having fun was the key."

Noted co-executive producer Michael Piller, "Terry was the only actress who came in to read where Rick [Berman] and I looked at each other and agreed she had hit the scenes."

Left: Terry Farrell as Dax, the station's Trill science officer.

Noted Zimmerman, "I think Mr. Roddenberry would be very pleased with the casting of DEEP SPACE NINE, since we've been able to practice what he preached all the time. Not to be concerned with race or color and to postulate a future that is positive, where the problems of mankind are pretty much solved and we're dealing with the problems of the universe."

Producer David Livingston observed that while the new TREK carries forward the progressive traditions of color-blind casting established in the original STAR TREK, which put black, Asian and Russian characters in lead roles, there was no intent to be politically correct in casting blacks or other minorities in important roles. "We got the best actors for the parts," said Livingston. "STAR TREK is about the fact that it doesn't matter what you look like or what your skin color is or if you have weird bumps on your head or stuff hanging out of your ears or weird colored hair or a mishapen body. It doesn't matter in the 24th century. People don't deal with that anymore. First of all, you're exposed to so many bizarre, different kinds of people, who has time for prejudice? It's silly. It's an outmoded kind of thinking. That's a credit to Gene [Roddenberry] and to Rick [Berman] and Michael [Piller] to continue that point of view. One of the key characters on this show is a Ferengi, and of all the creatures we've had, they're probably the most unappealing, yet now they're part of it."

Noted Piller of the casting criteria, "If the best actor for the role of Sisko had been Asian, you would have had an Asian commander. We were faced right from the beginning with the challenge of making this show unique and different and a step beyond THE NEXT GENERATION. The last

“STAR TREK is about the fact that it doesn't matter in the 24th century what you look like or what your skin color is.”

- Producer David Livingston -



Avery Brooks as Commander Sisko and Nana Visitor as Bajoran Major Kira Nerys, Sisko's second-in-command, on the operations center's open elevator.

thing we wanted to do was be accused of simply doing another STAR TREK and exploiting the formula. Rick [Berman] and I had a very high ambition to contribute to television, to not just put another quality hour on the air, but to try and advance television in our own way.

"We're very inspired by Gene [Roddenberry]. Gene advanced television. We can't hope to do that in the same manner that he did because he was there first. He was there in the pioneer days. The ground has been broken, but I think so much of television rests on its laurels or looks backwards or tries to find what works, what's safe. There has never been an hour dramatic series that has had a black lead that was successful and the old boys network in the television community would tell you that it's a huge risk to put a black man in the lead because it will turn off

a certain segment of your audience. Rick and I felt right from the beginning that we wanted the opportunity to consider a black lead for this show and we were delighted and impressed when the people at Paramount allowed us to have a full range of auditions to consider all races and all people. When it got down to it, we were delighted that Avery Brooks turned out to be the best actor we could find. We knew the pundits would tell us it was a risk, but if there was any franchise on television that could support this risk it would be STAR TREK and we felt we might be doing a little something for television."

With the ensemble finally in place, the principal photography on "Emissary," DEEP SPACE NINE's pilot, was completed as rewrites came in from Piller while some of the sets were still being constructed. David Carson, a veteran of some of the THE NEXT GENERATION's most mem-

orable episodes, including the notably fatalistic and dark "The Enemy" and "Yesterday's Enterprise," was hired to direct. "I have a feeling that the darker, grittier tone is one of the reasons they wanted me," said Carson. "They wanted my experience with grit in STAR TREK. It is true that this will be a much grittier environment than the *Enterprise*, which is part of the attraction. It's my feeling that part of the grittiness of DEEPSPACE NINE is not only the setting, but the attempt to access the slightly weaker side of human nature, while still telling extremely powerful and insightful stories."

Berman noted that *noir* didn't enter the equation for determining the show's directing roster. Following the show's premiere, the first year will be comprised of 18 one-hour episodes, with shooting continuing through May. "Paul

continued on page 35

STAR TREK DEEP SPACE NINE

ALIEN MAKEUPS

Getting beyond the bony foreheads and crinkly noses of Roddenberry's rule.

By David
Ian Salter

Michael Westmore, who has won the Emmy more than once for his makeup designs on *THE NEXT GENERATION*, is one of a handful of *STAR TREK* staffers who now find themselves pulling a double shift, performing the same duties on both *STAR TREK* series. In Westmore's case, serving as the makeup creator for both *THE NEXT GENERATION* and *DEEP SPACE NINE* has more than doubled an already considerable workload.

Because *Deep Space Nine* serves as an interstellar crossroads visited by a wide variety of different races, each episode of the new series is populated by a significantly larger number of aliens of a wider variety of races than was the norm on *THE NEXT GENERATION*. "Instead of having a guest alien coming through *THE NEXT GENERATION*, which we've had now and then on the show, on the new show I have them every week," explained Westmore. "Aliens on *DEEP SPACE NINE* are a way of life, it's expected."

Westmore is using some alien races familiar to *NEXT GENERATION* viewers as background characters on *DEEP SPACE NINE*, and vice versa. "We used the Bolin, the race of the character who plays a barber on *THE NEXT GENERATION*, in the pilot," said Westmore. "For *DEEP SPACE NINE* I created a bald orange creature with a turkey throat and a spoon nose, called a Rotciv, just to walk down the Promenade. Then we put him in the bar on *THE NEXT GENERATION*."

Westmore shares the makeup load on *DEEP SPACE NINE* with a staff of four assistants, including Jana Philips, the daughter of Fred Philips, the original makeup artist of the classic series. West-



Mathew Faison as Tagrian Surmak Ren in "Babel," makeup designed by Michael Westmore.

more also hires additional freelance makeup artists as needed for production, averaging about ten per shooting day. "I have Oscar winners working for me," said Westmore. "Top-quality makeup artists enjoy coming over and working on *STAR TREK* because it's fun. In between features, they give me a hand."

When Westmore had only *THE NEXT GENERATION* to contend with, he designed aliens to order, creating new races as the scripts called for them. "Now, with *DEEP SPACE NINE* going on, I'm not

even waiting around for scripts anymore," said Westmore. "I've got two aliens in clay now that there are no parts for. I'm going to design these things as background characters and if they like them, we'll resurrect them and build them for principals. That's so we don't wind up with the same things all the time, so we always have fresh things going."

Makeups for the major recurring characters include Odo. "The whole front of his face is an appliance that gives him a very textureless, plastic look," said Westmore. Dax, the Trill, had to be modified from the look of *THE NEXT GENERATION*. "The original Trills had a forehead appliance and a little nose piece," said Westmore. "They wanted a different look, so I do a spotting on [Terry Farrell]. I personally do it by hand every day. It starts up at the top of her forehead, then comes down

Terry Farrell as science officer Dax. Makeup supervisor Michael Westmore hand paints the design daily.



Armin Shimerman as Quark, the villainous Ferengi now made part of the family in the tradition of *THE NEXT GENERATION*'s assimilation of the Klingons.

around her hairline, in front of her ear and down the sides of her neck. In the pilot, she's even lying on a table, bare to the top of her bustline, and I had to continue the spots down her body. It's a laborious job. There seems to be no easy way to make up a stencil for that. It just has to be done every day."

For those who criticize *STAR TREK*'s aliens for their lack of imagination because they stick to a generally humanoid shape, Westmore has an answer. "I have to live with Gene Roddenberry's original concepts," said Westmore. "Rick Berman still goes along with them. That means mainly different forehead designs, but that is the concept of the show. It's not that we couldn't do something else. It was Gene's idea, not my idea. This is what he wanted to tie the universe together. We're being true to that concept."

Working on two *STAR TREK* shows has put Westmore on a demanding schedule, arriving at the studio as early as four a.m. and sometimes not leaving until nine at night. "My wife never sees me," said Westmore, with a laugh. □

STAR TREK DEEP SPACE NINE

THE PILOT, BEHIND-THE-SCENES

Michael Piller's teleplay was inspired by the devastation of the L.A. riots.

By Mark A. Altman

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE premiered the week of January 4th with its two-hour season opener "Emissary" written by Michael Piller, based on a story by Rick Berman and Piller. It carried the responsibility of not only keeping viewers interested in the new show, lured in by the hype preceding its airing, but also convincing avowed STAR TREK fans that a show set in STAR TREK creator Gene Roddenberry's universe without the input of the

Terry Farrell as science officer Jadzia Dax entering the landing bay, production designer Herman Zimmerman's claustrophobic submarine ambience.

"great bird" himself could be as good, if not better, than the two series Roddenberry had created.

The budget on the two-hour opener was reportedly between \$10 and \$12 million. By comparison, BATTLESTAR GALACTICA's three-hour premiere in 1978 cost \$8 million and Warner Bros upcoming BABYLON 5 was brought in for under \$2 million. DEEP SPACE NINE's hefty price tag makes it one of the most expensive pilots ever filmed, although many of the costs can be amortized over the future of its run, including over \$2 million spent on the show's sets.

Noted Berman, "When you create a premise pilot, which is what we did, you create a two-hour show where you have to set up an entire world and an entire group of characters and what brings them together and at the same time tell an entertaining and meaningful story. You have a big job cut out for you." For Berman, five years experience producing THE NEXT GENERATION made the job a little easier. "What that did was allow me to know what was possible and what wasn't," said Berman. "What our visual effects guys could give us and what they couldn't. What sets we could expect and how much we could expect to get done and what was pie in the sky."

Production designer Herman Zimmerman's concept for the space station setting of the show was built in miniature—four large-scale models, the biggest six feet by six feet—used by visual effects supervisor Rob Legato and his team to film outer space optical effects for the pilot. "Deep Space Nine is composed of three concentric horizontal rings," said Zimmerman. "The outer ring is a docking ring, the middle ring is an environment and cargo ring and the inner ring is the Promenade. The power core of the station and the operation's center is on a pedestal that's attached to the inner ring. The Cardassians [who built the station] like things in



The Enterprise and a Cardassian ship docked

three. On the outside ring are three vertical pylons for docking, with weapons banks on the ends for phasers and photon torpedos arranged mathematically to make for a pleasing shape seen from a distance. It's a recognizable form as distinctive as the exterior of the *Enterprise*."

"Emissary," like THE NEXT GENERATION's "Encounter at Farpoint" pilot, had the added responsibility of introducing viewers to an entirely new ensemble, endearing a new generation to jaded TREK viewers ready to decry a new cast as not living up to the standard set by the previous crews of the Starship *Enterprise*. Piller looked at THE NEXT GENERATION pilot written by Roddenberry and D.C. Fontana, before writing "Emissary," and found it helpful in breaking his story. "There's a great deal about the structure that's similar to 'Encounter at Farpoint'," said Piller. "One of the tricks I learned from watching 'Farpoint' again was that they didn't introduce Riker and Geordi and Beverly until two or three acts in. I told Rick [Berman] when we were structuring this, 'Let's hold off the arrival of two of our regulars late enough that I can do something with the other characters. My first suggestion was everyone was there and they're working and it wasn't as effective.'"

Ironically, one of "Encounter at Far-





Deep Space Nine, special visual effects supervised by Rob Legato for the series' two-hour pilot, "Emissary."

point's" strongest plot elements, the arrival of the menacing Q, was added by Roddenberry to pad out D.C. Fontana's script when he relented to studio demands that the opener clock in at two hours as opposed to the 90-minute premiere he lobbied for. "I think the addition of Q did come out of a time requirement but there isn't any question in my mind that the best thing in that show is the Q story," said Piller. "If it had been only that other story, it would have been a disappointment. The other defining element of "Farpoint" is the vision of Roddenberry where we have Picard arguing for the future of mankind, representing the advocate of humanity, when Q puts our species on trial. That's an extraordinarily philosophically ambitious idea and it really helps define STAR TREK for what it is. Without that, it would have been spaceships and monsters and special effects."

Incorporating a strong philosophical point of view into DEEP SPACE NINE was an essential ingredient insisted on by Berman. "The first day we sat down to meet about this, Rick said that somehow this

story must have the philosophical ambition that the 'Encounter at Farpoint' script had and that STAR TREK represents," recalled Piller. "Ultimately, what we created was an interaction and confrontation between aliens and humans that is not far different from 'Encounter at Farpoint.' Of course, we are exploring those issues and philosophies on a weekly basis through encounters with aliens. What is different in the pilot is that the aliens have no knowledge of a linear existence. We deal with what that means for [Commander] Sisko,

David Carson directs Avery Brooks as Commander Sisko and Cirroc Lofton as son Jake, taking a break on the Holodeck, in the bucolic opening of "Emissary."



“Rick [Berman] said from the first day that this story must have the philosophical ambition that STAR TREK represents.”

- Producer Michael Piller -

who has to come up with a philosophical explanation of here's why you don't need to fear me. 'We are not a threat to you. We're different and differences can be good,' he says, echoing the theme that we can co-exist in the universe."

The theme of co-existence was amplified by Piller in his second draft after the Los Angeles riots magnified the problem of divisiveness in our own contemporary society, giving him a new impetus for revising a teleplay he felt was too dull. "We had not sent the first draft to the studio yet," said Piller. "Rick read it and a lot of people liked it. But something was really bothering me. I couldn't figure out what the devil it was. What it turned out to be was that the first hour wasn't good enough. Through the introduction of Sisko we saw things on the station. It reminded me of the second hour of "Unification II," basically a character study of Spock. I remembered when I looked at that hour when it was finally cut together, I realized it was talky. It's fascinating talk but nothing was happening and I was very unhappy about that.

"I was really troubled with my pilot first draft because I was not falling in love with my own dialogue and my own characters. I was extremely critical. Rick will tell you that throughout this process, he said to me things like, 'It must be terrible waking up every morning and being as negative as you are.' But I felt very strongly and Rick will tell you that I dragged him into this rewrite kicking and screaming. The first hour was flat, nothing happened. It was basically dealing out the characters for everyone to see."

Ultimately, what Piller realized was that the characters existed without purpose in his original draft. The L.A. riots provided the metaphorical iconography for the rewrite, injecting new life into the stalled script. "I said Sisko's not a hero," Piller recalled. "Sisko's got to come in and have a problem that he has to deal with as a hero. While our mystery is unfolding, which will ultimately blossom in the second hour, Sisko must take this by



Effects supervisor Rob Legato with the Deep Space Nine miniature, filmed upside down. Below left: Filming the Enterprise and partial miniature used for docking shots (l to r, Judy Elkins, co-effects supervisor Dan Curry, Adrian Hurley, Erik Nash, Cari Thomas, Chris Schnitzer, Dennis Hoerter). Right: The Runabout.



the hand. In the first draft of the script, our guy essentially comes to the Beverly Center [a Los Angeles mall] and he decides to stay. The studio wanted to open with a shot of the Promenade and people gambling, so I wrote it that way, and I realized it didn't work. While I was going through this agonizing process, we had the riots in Los Angeles. Rick was the first to verbalize it. He said, 'There is something our show has to say about humanity co-existing and coming together. We need to build this into the alien interaction that we have in the second hour of the script!'"

Piller's rewrite transformed the hi-tech DEEP SPACE NINE into a ruined and cannibalized wreck. Clearly influenced by the devastation Piller witnessed on TV news reports about the Los Angeles riots, his opening description of the station's Promenade reads, "Our first look at this extraordinary setting is a shock. The striking Cardassian/Bajoran architecture is mysterious and impressive . . . and we can see how exciting a locale this could once have been. But now it's almost deserted . . . and it had been ravaged by vandals . . . storefronts have been broken out . . . trash and broken stock from the stores litter the thoroughfare . . . phaser blasts have burned scars on the walls . . ."

"I had started thinking that it was not a

dramatic situation for a man to come to the Beverly Center," said Piller. "It's not very dramatic for someone to go to their favorite mall and decide to stay, but for a man who decides to go to ruined South Central Los Angeles and decides to stay, that's dramatic. In order to bring drama to the first hour, I argued with Rick that we should come to a space station that's in ruins and that Sisko must begin the rebuilding process in the first hour in order to drive the story."

Ironically, what developed out of Piller's new approach to the material was the relationship between Quark, the Ferengi barkeep, and Odo, the security chief, that many of the writers subsequently have glommed onto as the best character dynamic since the bickering between McCoy and Spock in the original STAR TREK. "We had always had a shape shifting gag for Odo in the end of Act I and we had always had a Ferengi boy, Nog, who would become a friend of Sisko's son," said Piller. "In the rewrite, using all the elements that we had that were waiting to be thrown in, I put Nog at the scene of the crime and put him in trouble. I realized that when Sisko arrives at the scene on this ruined promenade and sees the Ferengi guys who used to run the bar and the gambling facilities, packing up their gear,

ready to leave, he could use it to his advantage."

Sisko threatens to incarcerate Quark's nephew Nog unless Quark stays aboard and helps in the rebuilding process as a "community leader." Despite being repulsed by the idea, Quark is reluctantly forced to stay at Sisko's urging. Recalled Piller, "In that scene Odo is watching Sisko in action and Sisko is doing this number on Quark. Suddenly I found myself writing these asides between Odo and Quark. Quark is saying, 'What do you want me to stay for?' And Odo says, 'I'm a little mystified myself commander. The man is a gambler and a thief.' And Quark comes back and says, 'I am not a thief!' And Odo says, 'Yes, you are. You're a thief!' Suddenly these guys are going at each other and I realized there's a magic there. There is a relationship there. These two guys have been arch-enemies who have been at each others' throats for the last several years—and they love it. They get off on trying to one-up each other and there's a love that comes within for one another between the good guy and the bad guy that we really explore in the first episode. That's the discovery of character and interaction Rick and I so much wanted to have. It's a conflict that's fun and restores to STAR TREK something that hasn't really been in evidence since the original show."

One scene that came easier for the writer is the show's sensational opening teaser which offers a glimpse into STAR TREK history by depicting the Borg battle at Wolf 239 whose aftermath is only glimpsed in "Best of Both Worlds, Part II." "It's a great backstory for our hero and it's a piece of action that our audience has heard about on sound monitors but never seen," said Piller. "For me, as the one who wrote the original Borg two-parter, it was a great opportunity to go back and do some more. It was just too irresistible. You want to desperately open your show with a bang and what could be a better way to open the show than to have Jean-Luc Picard as Locutus on screen saying, 'You will surrender, resistance is futile.'" □

David Carson directs Brooks and Terry Farrell as Dax, learning the operation center's control panel.



Lynch has done some light and lovely episodes for us and so has David Carson," said Berman. "We basically analyzed all the directors who have done 126 episodes of STAR TREK. Carson, Rick Kolbe, Corey Allen, Lynch, David Livingston and Les Landau are the key guys who are going to be doing the first dozen. Every director who has done STAR TREK would like to do DEEP SPACE NINE, but we're being really picky and choosy and taking our time in deciding who's going to do it."

Producer and occasional director David Livingston doesn't want to give short shrift to those helmers who aren't among the roster on DEEP SPACE NINE's freshman year. "Rick [Berman] and Michael [Piller] are going to want the directors they feel are correct for the material," said Livingston. "It's their show. Which is not to say any of the directors on THE NEXT GENERATION couldn't do DEEP SPACE NINE. But at this point Rick has made a decision to pick a certain number and concentrate on those at the beginning of the season."

One thing is certain, no directors who haven't directed a STAR TREK will be shooting DEEP SPACE NINE the first year, and due to the show's four-week production schedule, including pre- and post-production, Berman said that TREK actor/director hyphenates like Patrick Stewart and Jonathan Frakes won't be considered in the near future.

Despite criticism of THE NEXT GENERATION's idea of alien cultures being people with funny foreheads and crinkly noses, Berman is adamant about preserving the integrity of his perception of what Roddenberry's 24th century should be, and while his caution occasionally upsets members of his staff who want to experiment with bolder

“We have the highest budget on television and we still don't do action that well or a lot. You're forced to be more thoughtful.”

- Producer Ira Behr -



Avery Brooks as Commander Sisko with son Jake played by Cirroc Lofton. Parenthood makes Sisko a STAR TREK hero different from Kirk or Picard.

ideas, they respect his vision. "STAR TREK, by definition, is hokey," said Berman. "We have costumes which are obviously science fiction costumes and makeup, but it's very important to me that makeup and prosthetics don't look like masks from a really classy Halloween store. I don't want creatures to look like monsters. I don't want people dressed like '50s sci-fi spacemen. Our show is already people flying around in space suits, speaking perfect English, breathing the same air, and walking around with the same gravity. It's preposterous but it's a world we've all come to accept and use for a variety of metaphorical and entertaining reasons.

"Because the premise is somewhat outlandish, it is essential that the specific elements within it have to be grounded in very believable reality. Our characters have to

deal with each other in a very believable and realistic way. The hokey elements for me are more in the story than anywhere else. The major input I have in the scripts tends to deal with dialogue and plot points. They have to keep the dialogue believable and logical, not melodramatic or contrived, and keep the stories clear, and keep it from becoming sword and sorcery, a term Gene [Roddenberry] loved to use—stay away from hokey and corny melodrama."

Rene Auberjonois, who plays DEEPSPACE NINE's Security Chief Odo, noted the difference in the script process on STAR TREK. "I spent six years doing BENSON and it was a very different process where you sat at the table with the writers and you talked through the script. That does not happen here. They're much more complicated and they have to be structured and built more carefully."

Nana Visitor, who plays Kira Nerys, noted that the producers are available to discuss the scripts, if necessary. "I've made calls when I've read a script and something's cut out," said Visitor. "It doesn't happen very often. Usually the scripts stay pretty much the same. But I've called Rick [Berman] and we've had discussions and talked about how I feel. It's not like, 'Oh, God, here are the producers!'"

Writer/producer Ira Behr pegged the difference in writing STAR TREK to its being "cerebral." Noted Behr, "We have a good budget for this show, the highest budget on television and nonetheless we still don't do action all that well or a lot. You're forced to do more thoughtful, less intense television. It isn't people slapping each other in the face and drive-by shootings in space."

There's still the question of toeing the budget line, TREK's dreaded "pattern budget," an average that has to be met over the course of a season. "You get



STARFLEET DOSSIER

NAME: Miles O'Brien
RANK: Chief of Operations, DS9
ORIGIN: Earth
STATUS: Formerly Transporter Chief of USS Enterprise (NCC-1701-D). Married, with one son.

Colm Meaney has served aboard the Enterprise since THE NEXT GENERATION pilot, "Encounter at Farpoint," although mainly as a nameless face on the battle bridge. Through sheer charisma, the actor elevated himself from an anonymous transporter chief to one of the show's key recurring characters, now promoted to one of the co-stars aboard DEEP SPACE NINE.

On board the space station O'Brien is cast in the role of the old pro, a foil for the youthful exuberance of Dr. Bashir. "O'Brien is the working man's hero," noted writer/producer Ira Behr. "Bashir wants to know him and emulate him. O'Brien regards this young kid from the Academy with an English, upper class air that says, 'Go away kid, you bother me.' It could be fun because you don't usually see that. We shot a scene where Bashir is talking, talking, talking and he turns to O'Brien who just gives him a look that says, 'Get the fuck away from me, kid.' It's funny; it's good characterization."

Meaney observed that O'Brien has become a sort of everyman on STAR TREK. "O'Brien is somebody who is more human," said Meaney. "He obviously likes his job, but he also has other aspects to his personality. He doesn't have that element of being a fearless superhuman. There are situations they get into which, because of their Starfleet training, they react to as if it's normal, with steely nerves and all that, but I think O'Brien doesn't like that stuff too much."

Meaney's film roles include FAR AND AWAY, DIE HARD II, DICK TRACY and director Alan Parker's THE COMMITMENTS.

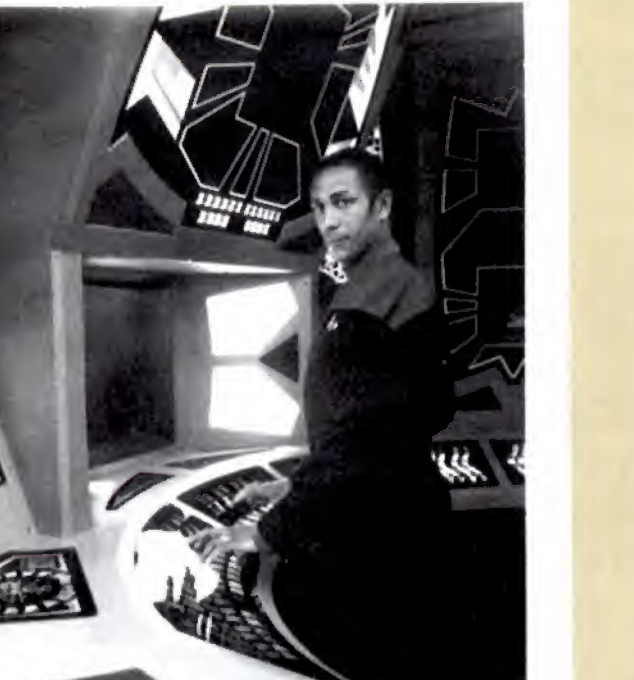


Right: Colm Meaney as Enterprise transport Chief Miles O'Brien.

STAR TREK DEEP SPACE NINE

CONCEPTUAL ARTIST RICHARD DELGADO

Just out of art school and having a ball as part of Herman Zimmerman's design team.



Manning the station's controls in ops, Deep Space Nine's operations center, Ilashy sets that top the Enterprise.

cranky over the course of a season," said Behr. "Everything will kind of wear you down a bit. We'll have those wonderful production meetings and we'll hear those dreaded words, you haven't met pattern and you've got to get rid of a scene. The guest cast on DEEP SPACE NINE is going to be a lot different than that of THE NEXT GENERATION. We're going to have more people. It's a space station. There will be more speaking roles to show more people inhabit this environment. Unfortunately, the more speaking roles you have, the higher the budget is for the guest cast and you've got to make it up someplace else, on the sets, on the opticals, stuff like that.

"As I wrote my first script, one of the considerations I had going over it was, dare he speak, dare they speak, dare I take out this optical so this person might be able to say something? Sometimes it's fun and creative, but by the twelfth show, you're looking at how many more weeks till the end of the season. It doesn't matter how you feel about the show, and it's not about whether you love or hate your job, it's just survival."

The other dilemma, according to Piller, is avoiding the well over 200 stories that have been told in TREK's previous incarnations in both the '60s and on THE NEXT GENERATION.

*By David
Ian Salter*

IF DEEP SPACE NINE makes a favorable first impression on viewers, a portion of the credit belongs to Ricardo Delgado, the illustrator who storyboarded the series' main title sequence. "Every week for at least the next season, the first images you'll see on the show were designed by me for Dan Curry, the visual effects supervisor for the title sequence," said Delgado. "It's a homage to both shows, the original series and THE NEXT GENERATION.

"It opens with a starfield, which harkens back to the first series. There'll be a lot of beauty passes of planets like THE NEXT GENERATION, as well as passes over the station, a homage to the dry-dock sequence in STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE. It was my way to hook up all three shows. I remember listening to [production designer] Herman [Zimmerman] say, 'Space, the final frontier,' is what got you to get your ass in the living room to watch some cool TV."

As illustrator on DEEP SPACE NINE, Delgado works under Zimmerman and Rick Sternbach, who functions on both STAR TREK series. Delgado is responsible for most of the pre-production drawings

"Sometimes they'll need a prop designed in two hours. That's the best part of the job. It's a challenge to your design sense."

- Artist Richard Delgado -



Delgado, with no previous STAR TREK experience, providing a needed non-Federation point-of-view.

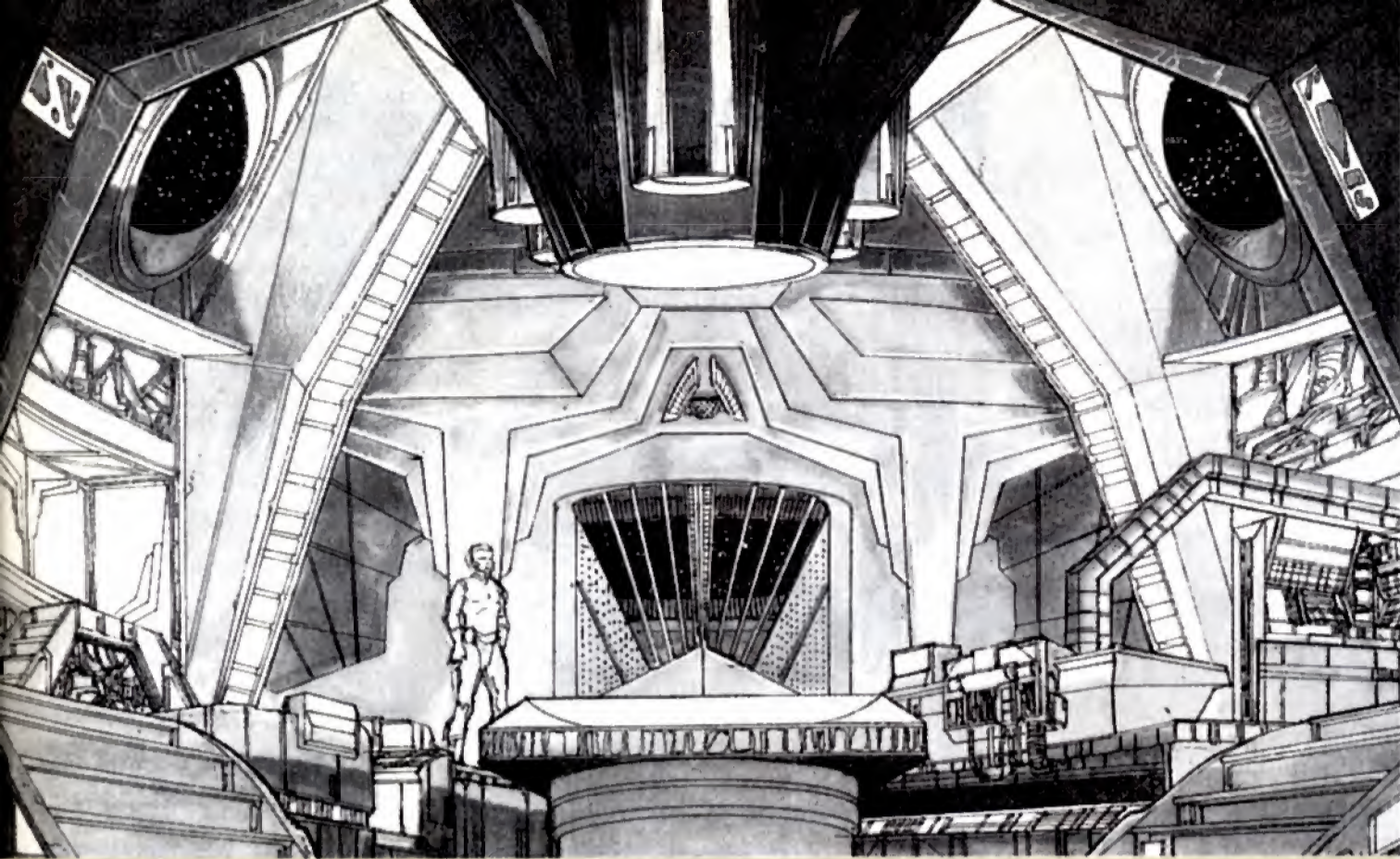
that become blueprints for a wide variety of elements on the show. "I've designed everything from matte paintings to ships to interiors," said Delgado. "I have fun all day. Sometimes they'll need a prop designed in two hours. You're under the gun and that is cool, because it's a challenge to your sense of design. That's the best part of the job. The writers try to visualize it, but the rest is up to us."

Delgado stressed that design

on the show is a collaborative process that is hammered out in production meetings. As an example, Delgado cited the six-foot model of the *Deep Space Nine* itself, the result of input by himself, Sternbach, scenic art supervisor Michael Okuda, scenic artists Doug Drexler and Denise Okuda, and set designers, Nathan Crowley and Joe Hodges.

"The basic configuration was from Herman [Zimmerman]'s idea, and everyone extrapolated from that," said Delgado. "Nathan Crowley and Joe Hodges set the standard for Cardassian architecture, which is a wonderful mixture of pseudo-fascist and crustacean. The exterior of the station is a carapace. Rick [Sternbach] came up with interesting ideas for the center core of the station."

Delgado's goal was to create a look distinct enough from that of STAR TREK that viewers would come to associate it with DEEP SPACE NINE as much as the Federation look has come to evoke THE NEXT GENERATION. Only three years out of art school, Delgado was initially apprehensive to find himself one of only two members of the DEEP SPACE NINE art department who had not worked in some capacity on THE NEXT GENERATION.



Delgado's concept sketch for "Ops," the multi-level bridge of Deep Space Nine, serving as the station's operations center.

"Michael Okuda and Rick [Sternbach] along with Andy Probert have been there since the beginning," said Delgado, who noted that Okuda and Sternbach's *Technical Manual* made it easier to fit in. "Pick up a *Technical Manual* and in a month you'd know the Federation inside and out," said Delgado. "That's the brilliance of their work." Delgado's relative lack of experience with the STAR TREK universe actually proved to be a strength, allowing him to approach design problems with a non-Federation-influenced eye, rare in an art department comprised of STAR TREK veterans.

Delgado found that designing the show on a weekly basis was substantially different than designing the series pilot. "We're working at a faster pace, but actually, it's more

fun," said Delgado. "We try to read the script as soon as possible, extrapolate different concepts, run them by Herman and get them approved. There is more ingenuity involved. With the Promenade, I knew I had a month or two to come up with different concepts. All I did for several weeks was different concepts for shop fronts and interiors. Now, if there's a shop that has to be designed, they need to have the sketch within a couple of days. Sometimes there'll be an existing set and we'll have to change it around. You have to think quicker. You have to think on your feet and see one thing in something else."

Delgado cited French artist Moebius as a primary influence on his drawing style. He's especially proud of the Versateller banking station on the Promenade, an idea that he

devised, not found in the script. Said Delgado, "I sketched it and the next thing I know, it's lit and a Ferengi bank is running it, and there are all kinds of logos on it, including a Romulan one. You see the characters walk by it."

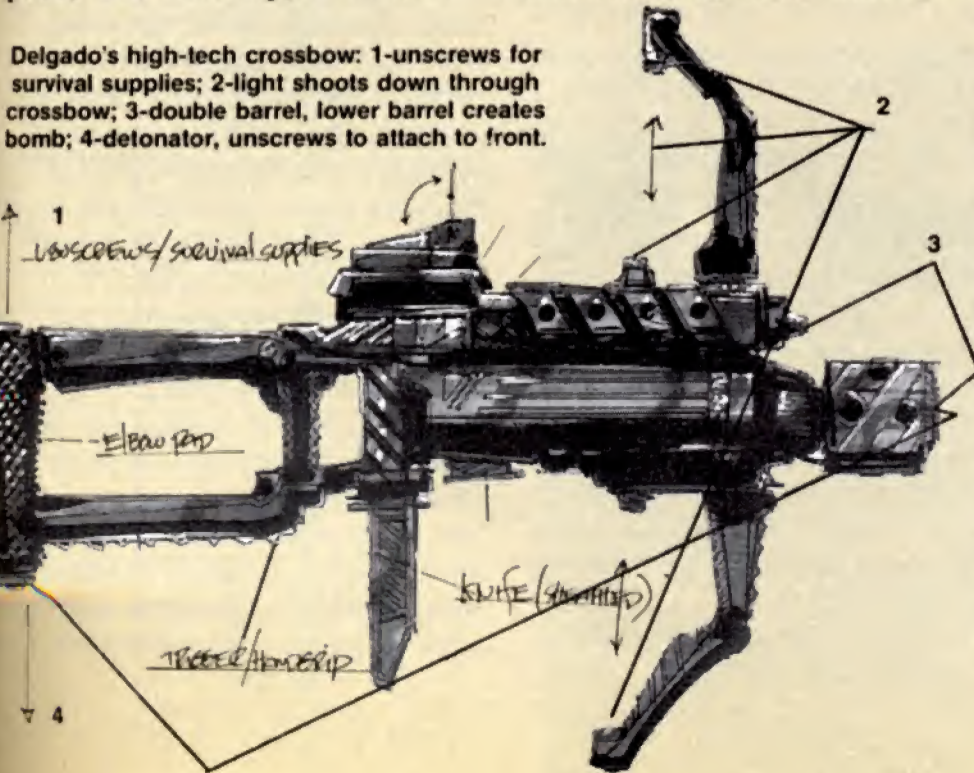
"I also designed the Cardassian bed that appears in the pilot. I imagined how the Cardassians would probably move up through political assassination, so I designed the bed with a force field around it when you sleep. When you walk up to it, you step on the Off button, and the force field comes off. Then you lie down and push the On button and the force field comes on again."

"I had a big hand in the Promenade. The cafe was an initial sketch of mine extrapolated by Alan Kay, one of the set designers. In my initial sketch there was an alien plant that undulates through the latticework on top, and I was glad to see that they followed that pretty closely."

"One time, I did a sketch of the interior of a shop. I won't say which one. I'll leave it up to the viewers to figure out. I took it to Herman and he said, 'Boy, that's cool.' Then he turned it upside down and said, 'I like it better.' So they built it that way. Now, more often than not, Herman will turn my sketches upside down before he approves them."

"I don't know if that's good or not." □

Delgado's high-tech crossbow: 1-unscrews for survival supplies; 2-light shoots down through crossbow; 3-double barrel, lower barrel creates bomb; 4-detonator, unscrews to attach to front.



STARFLEET DOSSIER

NAME: Odo
RANK: Security Chief, DS9
ORIGIN: Unknown
STATUS: Alien shape-shifter, discovered as an infant with no memory, adrift in a spaceship.

Viewers may best remember Rene Auberjonois as Clayton Endicott III on the hit ABC series *BENSON*, but won't recognize him in the prosthetic makeup by Michael Westmore that transforms the Emmy and Tony Award-winning actor into Odo, an enigmatic shape-shifter who is a gelatinous liquid in his natural state.

"Odo's incredible dignity and sense of justice is very appealing to me," said Auberjonois, bearing more of a resemblance to a can of Playdough than the studio mogul he won a Tony Award for portraying in the hit musical, *CITY OF ANGELS*. "Odo's very rigid, uptight and sort of a curmudgeon. But he's also got a wonderful deadpan humor and a very human kind of pain, because he doesn't know who or what he is."

Odo's shape-shifting transformations are optical effects supervised by Rob Legato in post-production, summoned up by Auberjonois during filming only in his imagination. "It's the nature of being an actor," said Auberjonois, of playing off an effect to be added later. "For people who are not professional actors, just remember what it's like to play house. I remember as a kid there was a place in the attic where my brother and I used to go pretend to be scientists. It's a willing suspension of disbelief. When we shoot, I just stand there and I know I've just turned back from being a rat. It's magical for me to see that."

Odo also has a winning relationship with Quark (Armin Shimerman), the station's Ferengi barkeep. "It's sort of a love/hate relationship," said Auberjonois. "He's a con artist and I'm a man who only sees black and white."

Right: Rene Auberjonois as Odo, the shape-shifting security chief.





STARFLEET DOSSIER

NAME: Kira Nerys
RANK: Major, Second-in-Command, DS9
ORIGIN: Bajora
STATUS: Former freedom fighter suspected of terrorist acts in overthrowing Cardassian occupation of Bajora.

Nana Visitor, a veteran of a number of television shows including the short-lived *WORKING GIRL*, based on the hit motion picture, took the Bajoran role in *DEEP SPACE NINE* intended for Michelle Forbes' Ro from *THE NEXT GENERATION*. Visitor confessed to not being an avid *STAR TREK* fan when she joined the new series. "I watched *STAR TREK* when it was in reruns," she said. "I think I watched them all while cooking dinner in my brownstone in New York. I was a fan of the quality of the show, but I was not a Trekkie."

Ironically, Visitor didn't even realize *DEEP SPACE NINE* was a *STAR TREK* spin-off when she read for the role. "I did not understand what I was getting into," she said. "Executive producer Rick Berman told me, 'At least the prosthetic is one of the least we have.' And I said, 'What prosthetic?' And he said, 'It's nothing. It's just a small elephant nose that you wear.' He had me going for five seconds. But I

didn't know. I had no idea. I just knew I wanted to play this woman very badly.

"*STAR TREK* has got so much strength and age behind it. It's cutting edge television. They give us wonderful material to work with."

As the station's second-in-command, Visitor's Kira often finds herself butting heads with Sisko. "I love the physical stuff," said Visitor. "She's running a ship and waging war."

Noted series co-creator Michael Piller, "There's no question that Kira, or had it been Ro, was always going to be an action hero. We went out of our way not to make the women on *DEEP SPACE NINE* caretakers."

Left: Nana Visitor as Kira, the Bajoran stand-in for Ensign Ro.

ATION. "The bottom line is that the same kind of stories that work on *THE NEXT GENERATION* are the same kind of stories we want to tell on *DEEP SPACE NINE*," said Piller. "It's the universe of science fiction and the universe of Gene Roddenberry. We cannot do stories on *DEEP SPACE NINE* that wouldn't work on the other two *STAR TREK* shows. The problems are the same. But we can't repeat ourselves. We have to come up with fresh and original material. It's very, very difficult."

Noted Behr, "I would like to be able to do speculative fiction, but the truth is we're doing a TV show in which it's very difficult to find TV stories which fit into the parameters of what's allowed. I don't think we have the luxury of a forum like *L.A. LAW* or *HILL STREET BLUES* or *I'LL FLY AWAY*, where the structure leaves openings that reveal what the series is about. What we're doing is what the fates decide: who pitches what, what we can develop in-house as we're doing all these rewrites? It becomes much more fundamental. The camera's ticking. We have to make that schedule."

Behr cautions against reading too much into *STAR TREK*. "We have to deal with things on such a fundamental, banal level, even when it comes to the quality shows, it's not really examining the human condition in a really deep way," said Behr. "We're trying to do an hour of television a week that we can be proud of, that is entertaining and that can be thoughtful in some ways. Ultimately, if we leave enough behind that could be sold at conventions, people will want to take the memos and the handwritten little notes we've sent each other and study them for hours and figure out what we meant. If they find out what we meant, they should call me and tell me because half the time I don't

“There's always another level to *STAR TREK*. It's nice to earn a living and not be embarrassed by what you're doing.”

- Actor Rene Auberjonois -



Terry Farrell as Dax and Siddig El Fadil as Dr. Bashir listen as director David Carson directs the traffic on the station's Promenade.

know."

But for actor Rene Auberjonois, "There's always another level to it. We did an episode which is a classic *STAR TREK* script, full of pyrotechnics and special effects and incredible stunts, but beyond that it deals with something. It's about a creature being hunted. On the surface it's about a fox hunt in the future, an alien race chasing this creature through space and how it affects our lives. I shot an episode about Odo called "A Man Alone" which really deals with prejudice, where people turn on him as a freak and suspect him of something he's innocent of. On one level it's just a murder mystery, but on another level it goes beyond that. *STAR TREK* consistently does that and I'm really happy about that. It's nice to earn a living and not be embarrassed by what you're doing."

STAR TREK's intellectual

content, for Siddig El Fadil, who plays the young Dr. Bashir is "one of the reasons for its longevity." According to El Fadil, "It's important that it's not pretentious about it. The stable of writers try and get something underneath and sometimes it's not that subtle. For instance, there's a whole episode about how to deal with death or children or education. They're worthy scripts, but it's dangerous to get pretentious about it."



One advantage that *DEEP SPACE NINE* has in its writing

is narrative synergy with its sister series, *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION*. Using the wealth of material created over six years on *STAR TREK*, Piller and his writing staff have injected the series with friendly reminders that we're on familiar ground. "The creative synergy allows you incredible opportunities," said Piller. "We've used Picard in the pilot, we've used Lursa and Bator [the

Klingon plotters from "Redemption"] in show two and we've used Q and Vash [the seductive archeologist who wooed Picard in "Captain's Holiday"] in the context of guest-starring roles. What I'm most delighted about is that we're not leaning on them."

Equally advantageous has been the production synergy which has allowed both series to utilize each other's sets and props. The addition of three soundstages of 24th century sets has proved an asset to *THE NEXT GENERATION*'s production. "One of my jobs has been to cross-pollinate," said producer David Livingston, who oversees the physical production of both shows. "On *THE NEXT GENERATION* we required a seedy kind of bar for a Ferengi to hang out in and we used one of the sets on *DEEP SPACE NINE* to do it with a minimal amount of re-

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STAR TREK DEEP SPACE NINE

SHAPE-SHIFTING SECURITY CHIEF

Rene Auberjonois is Odo, cut from the same cloth as Data and Mr. Spock.

By Mark Altman

Rene Auberjonois as Odo, DEEPSpace NINE's enigmatic shape-shifting security chief, follows in the footsteps of Leonard Nimoy's Mr. Spock and Brent Spiner's Data as another of STAR TREK's fully realized alien characters.

Like the actors who preceded him, Auberjonois comes to the role with a wide range of acting experience, and hopes that Odo will be equally well-accepted. "It's certainly a good gig, there's no question about that," said Auberjonois. "I guess it would be less than candid for me to say that I approached it first in a very mercenary sense. I'm an actor with two kids in college and I wanted to get this job. It was a good part. I was never a big Trekker. I've seen my share of STAR TREK and THE NEXT GENERATION and always admired them. I thought it was something appropriate for me to do because I have a lot of classical training and my background is in the theatre. As I've been absorbed into this world I have been more and more impressed by the depth of the subject. On a personal level, my character, Odo, is wonderful."

Portraying Odo is not Auberjonois' first foray into the STAR TREK universe. The actor played the nefarious Colonel West in a subplot that was cut from STAR TREK VI in its theatrical release, but restored in its video edition. Auberjonois' Colonel plots with Klingon conspirators and the Romulan ambassador Nan-



Auberjonois as Col. West, an Oliver North-styled plotter, a role cut out of STAR TREK VI.

clus to prevent the signing of a peace treaty between the Klingons and the Federation, director Nicholas Meyer's thinly veiled political jab at Colonel Oliver North.

"I have not seen STAR TREK VI," said Auberjonois, who noted he has often been cast as a villain. "I did it because Nick Meyer is a personal friend and asked me to. I usually play villains and I love them. I remember when my son was much younger and I was doing 'Richard the III' at the same time I was

doing BENSON. He asked, 'Why do you always play the bad guy.' And I said, 'It's because they're usually the best parts to play.'"

Nevertheless, Auberjonois' Odo is certainly a hero of the new STAR TREK, though he's not sure what the writers have in store for his mysterious alter ego. "It's evolving and the writers know a lot more about where it's going than I do," said Auberjonois. "I like not knowing and

Auberjonois and Armin Shimerman as Quark, the juiciest character interplay on STAR TREK since Spock and McCoy, with director Paul Lynch in Quark's bar.



Auberjonois as Odo, the space station's policeman, in makeup by Michael Westmore, a blank look that befits a creature who assumes the form of others.

opening the script each week and seeing a new facet of the character for me to consider. I like that challenge. It keeps it fresh for me, which is very important when you're doing it week-in and week-out."

Auberjonois likes the interrelationships Odo is developing with the other characters on the show. "There's something specific with every other character," he said. "My relationship with Nana Visitor, who plays Major Kira Nerys, is very interesting because she is above me in rank and yet she comes to me for a certain kind of wisdom." Odo's interplay with Quark, the Ferengi barkeep, offers the kind of humorous dynamic of the classic STAR TREK. "Armin Shimerman's Quark is very dear to me already," said Auberjonois. "Our characters are always the antithesis of one another. We're always bickering. I'm always after him."

Then there's the matter of Odo being an orphan with no memory on a quest to discover the nature of his own origin. "For me, the mystery of who he is is going to be what keeps me plugged into the character," said Auberjonois. "In a way, I hope it takes a long, long time to figure out who he is. I don't mean to sound Pollyannish, but I'm very happy with the character and the stories we've had to do. Ask me in a few years. Right now, I'm just in here plugging away and loving every minute of it." □

STAR TREK DEEP SPACE NINE

SCRIPTING THE ADVENTURES

Into the valley of death rode the freelancers—Peter Allen Fields and Ira Steven Behr on marshalling the troops.

By Mark A. Altman

The greatest difficulty in making *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* fly was finding writers who could craft stories that worked within the parameters of the universe established by Gene Roddenberry. *DEEP SPACE NINE* takes place in the same universe but thanks to the inclusion of non-Starfleet personnel as regulars, there's more leeway for conflict between characters. "We're always desperately looking for writers," said executive producer Rick Berman. "For *DEEP SPACE NINE* we took Ira Behr and Peter Fields from *THE NEXT GENERATION*. Then it came down to who was going to make up the remainder of our writing staff. We don't hire anybody, no matter who they are and what kind of reputation they have, unless they have written an episode successfully for us."

Berman's hiring policy grew out of the fact that many competent writers had been brought aboard *THE NEXT GENERATION* before cutting their teeth on a 24th-century tale, which often resulted in a short-lived tenure and an early departure. "Every writer who has ever had an axe to grind, and there are definitely axes to grind, has complained about having been through that fire, that ordeal," said Behr. "Ultimately, you leave because it's just too difficult to do television day in and day out. *DEEP SPACE NINE* at this point is about as open as you're going to get."

DEEP SPACE NINE story editor Peter Fields noted that the greater opportunity for character conflict on the new show doesn't make it any easier to write. "It's the *CASABLANCA* analogy," said Fields. "*DEEP SPACE NINE* is a place with strangers coming in and out and all sorts of things going on. Our people are getting to



Michael Westmore's Lurian bellies-up to Quark's bar. Behr would like to buy a drink for every freelancer shot down making a pitch.

know each other as well as the station and anything that can go wrong will go wrong. If you think that makes it easier to write, it doesn't. It promises to be as much fun as *THE NEXT GENERATION*, but on the other hand there ain't nothing wrong with *THE NEXT GENERATION*."

A veteran of such series as *HELLINGER'S LAW* with Michael Piller and *THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.*, Fields joined the *STAR TREK* writing staff fifth season after contributing fourth season's euthanasia allegory, "Half a Life." Behr

was a *NEXT GENERATION* writer/producer who left the show at the end of its third season. Behr wrote the fourth season episode "Q-Pid" and sold a big-budget period action film to Joel Silver, *HICOCK & CODY*, which has Harrison Ford attached as star. Behr recalled being approached by Maurice Hurley to join *THE NEXT GENERATION* second season, when he was working at Paramount on the NBC series *THE BRONX ZOO*. Behr said he rebuffed Hurley's overtures to join the series after lunch with the former *TREK* producer. "He told me what it would entail to work on the show and I said, 'Good-bye, thank you'," recalled Behr. "It was very different from what I was used to doing on series television."

Behr was eventually persuaded by Michael Piller to join the writing staff during the series' still tumultuous third season and left at the end of his first year after penning "Captain's Holiday," and "The Vengeance Factor" and contributing to numerous other rewrites. "When I had left, they offered me a two-year deal for the fourth and fifth seasons which I decided not to take," recalled Behr. "Michael [Piller] always kept the door open for me to return. We'd go to a ball game every year or something like that."

"Q-Pid" was written and filmed [fourth season] while I was waiting to do a rewrite on *HICOCK & CODY*. I came in; we met; I went off, wrote it and stopped by one day to watch them film it. The whole process was done while I was waiting for notes [on the feature script]. It shows you the difference between the two mediums. The writing is fun. I would tell anyone that writing a feature is a helluva lot more fun than writing television. It's much fuller and richer in certain ways. But writing television is a lot more fun as a whole because you're with people. You're break-



The Cardassian fleet pays a visit to Deep Space Nine in the pilot as the Federation takes control of the Cardassian station, the jumping off point for would-be scripters.

ing stories in a room. You're watching dailies every day. The set is there."

Piller had pitched Behr on joining the new series all along. "Basically, it came down to money and career," said Behr about his decision to join DEEP SPACE NINE. "I have three movies in feature development but it just doesn't pay what I could get doing this. This gave me a chance to step back and let things happen and get in on the ground floor of something that's going to take on a life of its own and be very huge. There's something fun about that."

Fields, who alternates rewrite assignments with Behr and Piller, echoed Behr's enthusiasm for working on DEEP SPACE NINE, pointing out that it hasn't been easy to remain true to the Gene Roddenberry ethos in creating the new series. "We are concerned about doing things right," said Fields. "And I don't know what that is. I think we're being true to what Gene Roddenberry envisioned. There's a standard which this show has to meet. It's not just that audiences remember what went before and you're going to get nasty letters—that's probably true—but it's more in keeping the faith in what we're doing. Of all the shows I've worked on over many years, this has been the hardest and also the most rewarding. I've never had this experience and I would not have missed it for anything."

Noted Behr, "People are focused on whether we're being true to Gene Roddenberry. Is this the 24th century? It is. We've had arguments about trying to move this

“We don't hire a writer, no matter who they are, or what their reputation, unless they have done an episode successfully for us.”

— Producer Rick Berman —

show to places where it doesn't belong. That's never going to happen because, as Michael [Piller] keeps saying, we have Gene sitting on our shoulder and as much as we try to knock him off, it's just too big a monkey to get off your back."

While Behr acknowledged that five years of doing STAR TREK has helped the writers avoid a plethora of traps on the new series, there are also roads not taken that DEEP SPACE NINE will need to explore on its own, without having learned lessons taught by previous TREKS. "Rick [Berman] will say a million times the experience of doing THE NEXT GENERATION is obviously coming in handy," said Behr. "We're in a better position than we were with ["Encounter at] Farpoint," [THE NEXT GENERATION's pilot], which was from scratch. But at the same time, it's a television show and the farther we get away from THE NEXT GENERATION,

the more we will fall into our own traps and see things that don't quite work. We'll make mistakes."

On the verge of the show's debut, Behr is torn between notions that DEEP SPACE NINE might surprise its audience, or fans might just see it as the same old thing. "People are going to be surprised about the show," said Behr, on the one hand. "Not that it's this angst-ridden, existential show. I'm not trying to make it more than it is. It's still an hour of STAR TREK television. But there's definitely conflict and there are characters who are carrying all kinds of things around with them. I'm not just talking about Sisko losing his wife, which is a nice TV convention, but there are people like Odo and Kira who are intensely driven people. There is more character conflict and the characters have

Script supervisors Ira Behr (l) and Peter Fields, visiting the tomb of the unknown STAR TREK writer.





INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS, STAR TREK-style: solving a murder mystery on the station and facing prejudice in "A Man Alone," (l to r) Siddiq El Fadil, Farrell, Brooks and Rene Auberjonois as Odo.

a little more of an edge because they're not Starfleet."

On the other hand, Behr looked at the realities of how DEEP SPACE NINE will be judged by STAR TREK fans. "The arguments are going to be based on who do you like better—Picard, or Kirk, or Sisko," said Behr with a sigh. "Does that set look better than Ten-Forward? Odo or Data? Dax or Spock? It's not fundamentally that much different."

During DEEP SPACE NINE's early development, it was difficult to generate story ideas because writers hadn't been exposed to the series yet. According to Behr though, there was certainly no lack of trying. "It's not as if THE NEXT GENERATION people waited to see the show," said Behr. "I would like to take everyone out who tried to write a story, wrote a story, got hired to write a story or got cut-off on a story. I'd like to take them out and buy them dinner because it was like into the valley of death rode the 600. On a wing and a prayer, some went off before we cast the show, while the sets were being built and all they had to read was this pilot with all these new characters and a new environment none of them knew. It's tough to hit a home run under those circumstances as a writer. I would not like to have done it. It all winds up falling on our shoulders, basically. Michael is running back and forth between both shows, so day-to-day, it's Pete and myself. We love each other dearly, but we would love to add more people on staff. They demand that someone write a show and prove themselves first. I'm hopeful, but doubtful, I'll be able to write a show of my own this season. It'll probably be rewrite city for the rest of the season. Maybe when we start to hit shows 17 and 18, we can start to do them from scratch."

Behr, like many of the writers who have toiled on the final frontier, admits to being

a fan of STAR TREK. "The thing that I find about THE NEXT GENERATION is that they all really love STAR TREK," said Behr. "I think that provides a core of solidarity that helps the show because it's one of those shows that really works best when people really give a damn about the whole mythos of STAR TREK. I watched the first three seasons of STAR TREK when it came out back in the '60s and I was a fan. My older sister and I watched it every week. But when the show went off the air, I never was a Trekkie, never cared much about it. I would have been just as happy if Jeffrey Hunter had played the lead. I liked him a lot. I never watched THE NEXT GENERATION except once or twice before I came on staff."

For Behr, the adulation that has endeared TREK to millions of fanatical followers is difficult to fathom. "I think we all have fears that no matter what we do, STAR TREK will overshadow it," said Behr. "It's something best not to dwell on. There's a lot of good things out there in the creative arts, great books that have never been written—superb books, interesting movies, interesting plays. People should be sitting around talking about *The Sound and the Fury* and going to conventions to try and figure out how someone can write that book or *Waiting for Godot*. That to me is popular entertainment, as popular as anything that deserves a level of recognition. STAR TREK gets that kind of recognition because basically life is full of jokes and we don't know and don't understand what goes on."

Perhaps most exciting for the writers of DEEP SPACE NINE is the freedom involved in creating something new, discovering their own rules and making them work. "We haven't become fossilized at this point," noted Behr. "You can always take chances in the first season on a show like this. It's not like you're going to have

six episodes and get cancelled. You have chances to do it here and chances in the fifth and sixth season where you've done everything and you can say, 'Make it a western,' or 'Put them all naked on the Holodeck.' Those are the times to really have fun. The second and the third season, when suddenly you've made it, things tend to get a little bit stodgier on most television shows."

Added Fields, "That's the adventure of this series. I'm not coming into something that's already established, like THE NEXT GENERATION. When I switched over to DEEP SPACE NINE, it was like the countdown to an adventurous ride that's now taking off. I'm very glad to be writing it. I don't know the destination but the ride so far with Mike [Piller] and Ira is great."

Behr noted that, like THE NEXT GENERATION, DEEP SPACE NINE will wobble a little before finding its space legs. During the summer hiatus, after the first half-season, the writers can assess their first year and approach the show's sophomore year a little wiser. "I think what we will learn, just like the audience will learn, is that the show will take on a life of its own. We'll have a better feel for the show after finishing the first year. But there is something nice about flying by the seat of your pants that first season. It's fun because so many times we sit there and think things that we thought would suck turn out to be great and things that we thought were going to play like gangbusters don't. The actor or the director may not take it the way we foresaw. Second season, hopefully, those questions have been answered to a certain extent and then you can sit like a pompous ass behind your desk and make pronouncements to people."

"This year the freelancers come in shaking," laughed Behr. "They're looking for direction and we look at them and say, 'We don't know. You tell us.' They go away and they say, 'Fucked again.' That's why they hate being freelancers. In the second season you say, 'Do this and if you don't, you're out.'" □

Filming Avery Brooks and Cirroc Lofton. "The set is there," said Behr of the fun of television work. "You're with people, watching dailies every day."



dressings. We saved a substantial amount of money.

"Using elements from both shows, we're able to deliver more to the audience for less. Normally, in the past, you would have had to cut a scene. For instance, the Ferengi scene was going to be cut until we thought about how we could do it cheaper. Michael Westmore is using the same aliens on both shows. We're trying to make sure such episodes don't air too close to each other. Bob Blackman is doing the same thing with costumes. We're trying to reuse and recycle, but not so the audience will ever know."

Noted Blackman, who designs the costumes for both shows, "We did 12 Cardassian suits for the pilot and then we got to use 11 of them on *THE NEXT GENERATION*. They just wrote the Cardassians right in. I love that. We have this great opportunity to mix and match and we do."

For the most part, however, the staffs of the two *STAR TREK*s are completely autonomous.

"We have much too much work to do," said production designer Herman Zimmerman. "Where it's possible, we'll certainly cooperate. We've used a lot of props from *THE NEXT GENERATION* because, frankly, we haven't had the time to generate all the props that we need for the stories here. We borrowed furniture from Jimmy Meese and setpieces from [NEXT GENERATION production designer] Richard James, and vice versa. We did have the *Enterprise* on the pilot, but in the series we probably won't see the *Enterprise* very often. The thrust of the series is to have it stand on its own."

How is Berman handling the workload of supervising two of the most complex shows on television? "When I was in charge of one of these TV shows, it was taking up all of my time," said Berman. "I

“The show will take on a life of its own. But there is something nice about flying by the seat of your pants that first season.”

- Producer Ira Behr -



Terry Farrell as Trill science officer Jadzia Dax and Nana Visitor as the station's Bajoran second-in-command, Major Kira Nerys, strong female roles.

was working 50-60 hours a week. I can't work 100-120 hours a week so what I have had to do is start delegating things that I normally have not been willing to delegate. It's a bitch. The attention that I put into the scripts and the rewrites and the polishing of the scripts on *THE NEXT GENERATION* is something that is very difficult for me to walk away from. The work that I do in the cutting room is also difficult to give up, but I'm finding that I can walk away from it to a small degree. On *THE NEXT GENERATION*, until last season, I'd normally put 15 hours of cutting time into a picture until it was locked. Now I'm probably putting in five hours. And I'm putting in a lot less time on the rewriting of *THE NEXT GENERATION*. I've found ways of working with [NEXT GENERATION co-executive producer and script supervisor] Jeri Taylor that I think are comfortable and save

some time."

Unlike Roddenberry, Berman has managed to ride herd over those involved with the creation of *STAR TREK* without alienating the troops. "I've got over 300 people working for me and I don't think there's a TV show in L.A. right now that has less attrition than we have," said Berman. "We have the same teams of people working on the show that we had five years ago with very few exceptions. On *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* we have seven actors. Usually after six years of a series, the actors are all at each other's throats, or the directors' throats or the producers' throats. It's ugly. We have as warm and healthy a creative rapport as we had in the beginning and the same is true of the myriad people involved with the production of the show. Maintaining that delicate balance of keeping the place running and keeping people happy, feeling like they're part of the creative process, is my biggest challenge."

One of the hardest tasks Piller faced as executive producer of *THE NEXT GENERATION* was finding 26 stories a year. Fortunately, *DEEP SPACE NINE*'s first season only calls for 18 episodes after the two-hour opener. "I'm assessing our stories every day and if we go to a second season there will be no rest," said Piller. "*THE NEXT GENERATION* is in development 52 weeks a year and that will have to be the same for *DEEP SPACE NINE*. The hardest thing is to come up with the ideas. After the pilot, we had ten really good ideas on *DEEP SPACE NINE* and nothing on the other side of that. We have to come up with eight more stories to get us through the end of the season. I won't start writing something I'm not really crazy about. We have to wait and hope somebody will walk in the door with a new idea that we'll get excited about. Fortunately, they always do." □



STARFLEET DOSSIER

NAME: Jake Sisko
RANK: Civilian
ORIGIN: Earth
STATUS: Son of DS9 Commander Benjamin Sisko.

Cirroc Lofton makes his television debut as Jake, the 14-year-old son of station commander Benjamin Sisko. Having lived on four different starships and been stationed on two planets, Jake yearns to return to earth rather than be forced to live aboard *Deep Space Nine*.

Relax, Jake is unlike the infamous Boxey of *BATTLESTAR: GALACTICA* or *THE NEXT GENERATION*'s Wesley Crusher, who earned the derision of fans for saving the *Enterprise* one too many times. Jake is simply a young teenager, with dilemmas that many members of the show's audience can relate to, a role that executive producer Michael Piller hopes will explore the real issues facing single fathers and their kids.

"The two of them struggle, as fathers and sons do every day," said Piller. "This kid does not have any great technical skills. He's not going to save the ship. He's a kid. And we will see other parts of the station through his eyes. The bottom line is that [Sisko] our hero, our star, had to be different. He couldn't be Picard. He couldn't be Kirk. We felt giving him a son as an added burden enriched his character, and gave us the opportunities to see him on a personal level that we rarely got to see Kirk and Picard on."

"Family values has become a curse word this year, but I think it's important that we, as writers and creators, continue to provide strong role models on television for parents and for television."

Lofton was among a cadre of young actors, both black and white, who auditioned for the role of Jake while the lead role of Commander Sisko remained uncast until shortly before production began. Once Avery Brooks was cast, Lofton was ready to step in.

Right: Boyz 'n the Hull: Cirroc Lofton as Jake, 14, Sisko's son.



FRIDAY THE 13TH IX

New Line revives Paramount's moribund

By Chuck Crisafulli

When last seen, Jason Voorhees was curled up in the New York City sewer system wearing nothing but a pair of BVDs, the climax of the generally atrocious *FRIDAY THE 13TH PART 8: JASON TAKES MANHATTAN* (1989), supposedly done in for good by a swirling flood of corrosive toxic waste. And that would have been the end of it—Paramount exec Frank Mancuso Jr. had grown both tired of and embarrassed by the series he had turned into one of the studio's lesser tent poles and decided to drop it to go on to supposedly bigger and better things—last summer's *COOL WORLD* was the result. But New Line Cinema saw a buck to be made and picked up the rights nobody wanted at Paramount to continue Jason's slashing exploits. New Line's *JASON GOES TO HELL* opens March 12, the first in the series not to be released on a Friday the 13th.

But if the carnage on screen barely holds your interest, there are still a couple of interesting wrinkles to Jason's return. The first is the notion that New Line is using the production as a springboard to bring back their own resident slasher Freddy Krueger, killed off in *FREDDY'S DEAD: THE FINAL NIGHTMARE* (1991). As reported in a *Variety* story last November, "Can Freddy Steady New Line?", the studio, according to the trade paper, plans to revive Krueger in 1993 to "avoid a nightmare on Wall Street." A source on the production confirmed New Line's strategy, describing the coda of *JASON GOES TO HELL* as a shot of Freddy's hand picking up the destroyed Jason's goalie mask, setting the stage for Freddy's comeback

"It was a terrible movie," said first-time director Adam Marcus of Paramount's Part 8. "They took the youth audience for complete imbeciles."



Jason in *FRIDAY THE 13TH—PART 8* (1989), Paramount's last slashfest.

film later in the year. (*JASON GOES TO HELL* had once been pegged for an August, Friday the 13th release date, which would have been the 13th anniversary of the release of the original and a publicity bonanza.)

The other point of interest in Jason's comeback is the return of series creator Sean Cunningham, who had sold off the sequel rights to Paramount after the first film became a sleeper hit in 1980. Cunningham, who declined to be interviewed, was said to have been fed up with the pedestrian direction the series had taken. To direct Part IX, Cunningham, as producer, brought in 23-year-old protege Adam Marcus to direct. Kane Hodder is also back for his third

consecutive portrayal of Crystal Lake's prodigal son. Harry Manfredini returns to provide the series' signature menacing music riffs, and the KNB Efx Group was tapped to supply the usual gory special effects.

Mike DeLuca, a genre fan and New Line executive instrumental in the development of the company's *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET* series, noted he is happy to have Jason in house. "The project grew out of New Line's personal relationship with Sean [Cunningham]," said DeLuca, recently promoted to executive vice president and chief operating officer at New Line. "I was first assigned to it as the executive on the project. It's being done as a negative pick-up, which means it's more of an acquisi-

tion than a New Line production. Sean produces the film and we pay on delivery. We thought that if we were going to do another one, we might as well let the guy who created it do it his way. Having Sean back was definitely the key factor."

Though Cunningham was still working on his producer's cut of the movie, DeLuca had seen the footage. "It's a stylish film," said DeLuca. "It's got more humor than the others, but not to the denigration of the genre. It's more in keeping with the frantic tone of a Sam Raimi or Peter Jackson movie than the typical *FRIDAY THE 13TH* film, and that appeals to us as well." According to DeLuca, though risks were involved in Cunningham's handing of the directorial reins to young Adam Marcus, the gamble has paid off nicely. "Adam aimed big," said DeLuca. "There's a certain relentless energy to the picture, an exciting rollercoaster effect like the first *TERMINATOR*."

Though first-time director Marcus is quite young, he actually has a long history with *FRIDAY THE 13TH*. When the original was filmed near Marcus' Westport, Connecticut home, the 11-year-old movie buff found work running coffee on the set for director Cunningham. "That was when I got the bug to start making movies," said the graduate of NYU's film school. Marcus is not only one of the youngest directors ever to helm a *FRIDAY THE 13TH*, he's probably the only one who has also put on a production of *GODSPELL*. "I ran a theatre company back east with my brother," said Marcus. "That's when Sean became acquainted with my work and started putting money into my productions."

JASON GOES TO HELL

horror franchise to hype their Kruegster.

Marcus claimed to be a fan of the FRIDAY THE 13TH movies, but noted there was much to improve upon. "The biggest problem is that they seem to be a collection of decisions by 40- or 50-year-old executives trying to make movies about and for much younger people," said Marcus. "They were full of a weird kind of preachiness. You do drugs. You have sex. You get killed. While that's a fertile way to terrorize people, it's a little bit redundant, not to mention just plain boring. Kids aren't just about sex and drugs. Teenagers have a lot more to say than what those movies allow them to say.

"Also, let's face it—it got pretty hard to conceive of all these people coming back to this summer camp. Even if you don't actually trip over the bodies, a hundred people have disappeared there! How can you tell the audience that loving parents keep sending their kids off to this bloody nightmare? Moving the story to New York was a great idea. What if the baddest guy went to the biggest city? It was just a terrible movie. He never really got there. They took the audience for complete imbeciles. Jason is supposed to take Manhattan, and in fact, he spends most of his time on a boat."

Screenwriter Dean Lorey agreed that the series concept needed some rethinking. "I worked with Sean before, and he was always saying that he wasn't going to do another FRIDAY THE 13TH unless he could do something different with it," said Lorey. "There have been eight movies and most of them have been pretty bad. Usually they're carbon copies of the previous movie. We decided that there was no



New Line's new Jason, in makeup of his toxic waste disfigurement from 8 by KNB Efx.

reason to remake the earlier movies because anybody could just go out and rent them. We went for a new direction, keeping Jason and some of the basic elements. I really like the character of Jason, but I thought the other movies worked best when they had a protagonist who was a bit of a match for Jason, like the telekinetic girl in Part 7. I like somebody who could put up a fight rather than a bunch of teenagers who get slaughtered one by one."

Jason's match in the new film is Creighton Duke, played by actor Steven Williams, whose film credits include HOUSE and BUCKAROO BANZAI. The Duke character is a world-famous bounty hunter of serial killers who has finally managed to figure out how Jason can be killed, permanently. Other cast members include John D. LeMay (FRIDAY THE 13TH: THE SERIES), Kari Keegan (CHEMICAL PEOPLE), Steven Culp (DEAD AGAIN), Erin Gray (BUCK ROGERS) and Alli-

son Smith.

"We tried to go back to the first one and get into some Voorhees family history," said Lorey. "We tried to tie up some loose ends. Throughout these films Jason always gets killed in different ways and he keeps coming back, but the reasons are never explained—it's just a convention of the series. We decided that we'd create a mythology that explains the history of Jason and explains how this could be happening."

Actor/stuntman Kane Hodder, who displays a great deal of pride in being the only performer to repeat the role of Jason, was happy to have more plot motivations this time around. "I've been working with Sean for almost seven years as a stunt coordinator, in all the films he's done recently," said Hodder. "For him to become involved again with something he created is the best thing that could have happened to these movies. I like to think that people want to see me do my part. It's going to be a

lot of fun, and I think it's going to scare the hell out of people."

One dilemma for New Line has been the title of the movie. Originally, it was going to be called FRIDAY THE 13TH: THE NINTH LIFE OF JASON VOORHEES. But all parties involved agreed that they didn't want the public to view this film as simply another chop of Jason's cold cuts. It was decided to drop the numerology from the title. "Sean was displeased with all the ones after PART 2," said KNB makeup expert Howard Berger. "We're picking up from where 2 left off. The idea wasn't to follow PART 8, because that pretty much led nowhere." For a while, FRIDAY THE 13TH: HEART OF DARKNESS was considered as a title, as Jason's evil heart is an important organ in the storyline, borrowing the title of the Joseph Conrad novel that APOCALYPSE NOW was based on. □

Waiting in the wings: Robert Englund as Freddy Krueger. New Line gets back in the slasher business in 1993.



MATINEE

Movie monster-making in the '60s is the backdrop for Dante to escape the genre.

By Steve Biodrowski

"MANT... HALF MAN... HALF ANT... ALL TERROR!" screams the trailer, but don't expect the film to be coming soon to a theatre near you. Instead, you'll have to settle for the film-within-a-film which appears in *MATINEE*, Joe Dante's coming-of-age comedy which centers around a Saturday matinee premiere taking place in Key West, Florida, during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Written by Charlie Haas, the film features John Goodman as Lawrence Woolsey, a William Castle-esque producer-director in town to plug his new movie. Simon Fenton (*THE POWER OF ONE*) plays his biggest fan, Gene, a lonely 14-year-old living with his mother and brother on the nearby naval base. Universal

John Goodman plays filmmaker Lawrence Woolsey, inspired by the late gimmick master William Castle.



Cathy Moriarty menaced in *MANT*, Dante's film-within-a-film recreation of '60s movie horror, using authentic music tracks from the Universal monster movies.

planned to open the film nationwide on January 29.

"It's a project I've been trying to get made for four years," Dante recalled last November, while in England to score the film. "It started as a pitch from a writer named Jericho Stone, which was considerably different from what we ended up with. His version was set entirely in a movie theatre, with really young children, and it was something of a fantasy with the kids imagining the theatre employees as bigger than life. The idea of doing a movie about Saturday matinees was very appealing, but it changed quite a bit as it developed. Ed Naha did a draft a little bit more like the one we shot, raising the age level of the kids. Finally, we ended up with Charlie [Haas], who, I think, really brought the heart and soul, all the characterizations and dialogue. That's when we

added the character of Lawrence Woolsey. In Naha's script, it was a horror movie star, Boris Selrinky, but in *GREMLINS II* Robert Prosky played a similar character, so Boris evolved into this bigger-than-life movie director."

The closest antecedent in Dante's filmography is *EXPLORERS* (1985). The character of Gene in *MATINEE* is another boy whose childhood interest in the fantastic is about to give way to a more adult interest in the opposite sex. The difference is that *MATINEE* is not a genre effort, per se. All the fantastic elements have been relegated to the films Gene watches, while his real-life pursuits are clouded by an absent father (away on a naval vessel) and the looming threat of a nuclear holocaust.

"The movie contrasts the scariness of life with the scariness of movies," said Dante.

"It's basically a light comedy, but it does have some serious aspects to it. I was about the age of the kids during the Cuban Missile Crisis, so I remember that as being a really scary period. I remember being fully convinced at the time that it was going to be the end of the world that weekend. There was a feeling of powerlessness, a feeling that events over which you had absolutely no control were in force and might be too much for the people running the world, and that there was not much that we were going to be able to do about it. It's an interesting subject, and I don't think it's ever been explored very much, so it's a little different."

This may not sound like material for light comedy, but Woolsey, who becomes sort of a father surrogate for Gene, provides an amusing array of gimmicks in his attempt to promote his new film. "He's the hero—nothing interferes with his drive to entertain the public, not even the [potential] end of the world," said Dante. "This guy is really a huckster. He's almost like David F. Friedman. He's distributing the movie himself, and he's doing everything he can do to get people to go see it. It's a part of advertising that I think has sadly disappeared. Every movie now has the same ad no matter where it plays. The advertising stuff is all done by research. There's none of this seat-of-the-pants showmanship that guys like [William] Castle pioneered. He made movie-going an event—even when the movies



The Mant, "half man, half ant, all terror," walks through a Saturday matinee, Woolsey's "AtomoVision" gimmick that backfires during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

weren't events, the fact that they were playing in the theatres was. The ballyhoo stunts and gimmicks he had made movies a lot more fun to go to. He sort of revitalized that whole kind of filmmaking. Nobody does that anymore. Not only that, but they'll give up on a movie in just one weekend. If it doesn't perform, then it's 'hit the road!' Guys like Castle and [Roger] Corman had a lot of money wrapped up in these pictures, and they would do whatever they could to sell them no matter how badly they might have opened initially. I miss those days, and this film harkens back to them."

Woolsey's showmanship may recall William Castle, but his film is also suggestive of Jack Arnold and Roger Corman. Dante shot 30 minutes of MANT, of which approximately 15 remain in MATINEE. "It was all meticulously done in the style of that period," Dante explained. "It's sort of an affectionate spoof, but a lot of it is almost indistinguishable

from the real thing. I certainly didn't make any malicious fun of it—there's nothing in MANT that isn't in that kind of movie. You almost don't have to [go for a joke]. A lot of it is inherent in the absurdity of the images. It's enhanced by the fact that we had access to all the music tracks from the Universal pictures, like THE DEADLY MANTIS and TARANTULA—the authentic music, the

authentic look, the authentic dialogue—everything."

According to Dante, making MANT was "very much like working for Roger Corman again. It was done very quickly. We painted all the sets black-and-white so we'd know what they would look like on screen, and we got a bunch of actors who'd appeared in some of the movies of that time [including Robert Carrington of THE THING]. We asked Rick Baker about making a giant ant head for us. We really couldn't afford him, so he directed us to a guy named Jim McPherson, who designed a considerably farther along, state-of-the-art Mant head than would be appropriate for 1962. Nevertheless, it seems to capture the spirit of the thing." The minimal special effects were supervised by Dennis Michelson.

Besides capturing the spirit of a 1962 monster flick, Dante also had to worry about capturing 1962 period detail. "What's different about making period movies now is that every place you go has handicapped access ramps—they're everywhere," lamented Dante. "It's something you don't think about until you go looking for locations for a movie. There's not a lot of respect for history in America. They're pretty much into bulldozing anything that's over 10 years old. So finding places to shoot that can be made to look like they did 30 years ago is not as easy as it used to be and it's going to be even harder in the future.

"We went to Key West, to the actual theatre where this would have taken place, and it

Omri Katz, cornered in his fallout shelter. Universal is tentatively set to open director Joe Dante's coming of age story—with monster trappings—in February.



Moriarty and the Mant, designed by Rick Baker protege Jim McPherson.

had become a disco," Dante continued. "Key West is very built up and touristy, not at all like it was in the '60s. We ended up shooting in another part of Florida in an old legitimate theatre that had been built as a silent movie theatre and hadn't changed much. The interior we built at Orlando's Universal Studios. The best thing about being there was we could go on the BACK TO THE FUTURE ride every day. It's a great ride. It ruins you for other rides."

John Hora, Dante's usual cinematographer, is back. And Jerry Goldsmith (EXPLORERS) provides the music. Woolsey's Atomo-Vision, an Emergo-like gimmick causes a panic that drives Gene and a neighborhood girl closer together, resulting in a happy ending when they realize that the world hasn't ended after all. It's all part of the humorous charm which Dante hopes Hollywood will notice. "It's nice to be able to do something different," said the director. "Once you've established yourself in one place, they tend to see you as able to only do that thing. This is sort of a half-step away [from genre films]. That doesn't mean I'm not going to do more of them. Hopefully, it can lead to people saying, 'It doesn't have to have a spaceship in it if he does it.'" □

Space Rangers

Television space opera series molded on the wild, wild west.

By Mark Altman

Another entry in the television science fiction sweepstakes is *SPACE RANGERS*, a six-episode, limited series to begin airing on CBS during the February sweeps. The new TV space opera is from the production team behind the features *BACKDRAFT* and *ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES*.

"Someone described us as a 'blue collar *STAR TREK*' but I think we're more along the lines of *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK* and *STAR WARS* with a little bit of *ALIEN* and *ALIENS*," said series creator and co-executive producer Pen Densham. The idea for the series, originally called *PLANETBUSTERS*, languished in Densham's computer for years, one of many ideas he jotted down in hopes of exploring one day. "Robin Hood was in my files for years," said Densham. "This was based on what would happen if you parachuted a bunch of guys onto a new planet, and all the adventures that would engender."

Densham was quick to point



Cary-Hiroiyuki Tagawa as the Grizzly, a Grakka warrior, the *SPACE RANGER*'s lead attack dog.

out that he doesn't consider *SPACE RANGERS* to be a science fiction show, but action/adventure. "I think that Asimov wrote science fiction," said Densham. "Arthur C. Clarke writes science fiction; Heinlein wrote action/adventure. I'm also a tremendous fan of Robert Sheckley and the way he sculpts characters and futuristic environments. The world I'm trying to capture is

one where it's more about the power of your ability to enjoy these worlds. I hate pure fantasy where it's knights and armor on a planet. That's too far to the right for me."

Densham likens the tone of his show to the romanticism of a World War II adventure film. "Our ship has a shark drawn on it and Chennault is the name of the leader of the group," said Densham. "I tried to create a group of characters who paralleled World War II adventurers because I felt that was the last time we were romantic in a war environment and not skeptical. It occurred to me the greatest way to focus an adventure series was to take the equivalent of a foreign legion fort and put it on the frontier."

The heart of *SPACE RANGERS*' futureworld is set at Fort Hope, an outpost of the Earth Confederacy on the frontier of explored space, built on an ancient alien trading center where races over the millennia have mingled. The Space Rangers protect Earth territory from a myriad of threats, including the *Banshee*, a vio-



Linda Hunt as Commander Chennault.

lent and dire alien opponent. "I wanted to have an unpredictable source of attack that we would later grow to actually admire," said Densham of the *Banshee*. "At the moment, they're the bad guys we're at war with. At some point, you're going to find out that, like the Apaches, they're actually intelligent and have a purpose."

Jeff Kaake plays Captain Boon. Among Boon's crew is newcomer Marjorie Monaghan as tough-talking space pilot Jo Jo. "If you write a strong woman, you either get a vamp siren who's very bitchy or someone who can't really pull it off," said Densham. "When we cast Marjorie we recognized an essential decency and innocence but at the same time a strength that we fell in love with. She never loses her femininity. We've asked her to slug guys and do all sorts of things. She's like Diana Rigg. She could do anything and never lose her charm."

Also on Boon's Space Ranger team is a Crocker warrior played by Cary-Hiroiyuki Tagawa, part of a fierce, cannibalistic race which needs to have its animal passions subdued by an electronic pacifier. "He's an extension of Azim in *ROBIN HOOD*," said Den-

“It’s like a fort on the frontier,” said series creator Pen Densham. “You’re going to find out that, like the Apaches, the Banshees are actually intelligent and have a purpose.”



Leading Fort Hope on the space frontier, adventure in the STAR WARS tradition.

sham, who cowrote *PRINCE OF THIEVES* with his partner, Richard Lewis. “He’s also very much an extension of the Zulu from *KING SOLOMON’S MINES*. We’re saying with this character, you should be able to use all of your emotions, but you should be able to channel them. It’s not done in an obvious or preachy way. Science fiction adventures are like fairy tales or parables in the sense that we find things out about ourselves.”

Perhaps Densham’s biggest casting coup was landing Academy Award-winner Linda Hunt for the role of Chennault,

the commander of Fort Hope. “Chennault was written originally as a male,” said Densham, “but I wanted Hunt. She came in and met with us and she’s charming and intelligent and a tremendous actress. She said, ‘It’s a very nice script, but I can’t for the life of me figure out why you would want me for this role. If you can explain it to me, I’ll play it.’ She personifies a lot of things I want to say about the future. She has dedication and leadership without belligerence and sensitivity without weakness.”

To bring his vision to the screen on a budget that Den-

sham labeled “considerably less than *STAR TREK*’s” was one of the producer’s biggest challenges. For special effects Densham hooked up with ILM, with whom he worked on *BACKDRAFT* using their CGI capabilities. “We were toying with going with models and we came down on CGI,” said Densham. “We’ve reverted to models in certain cases. We’re trying to spread out and work with a number of different groups.”

Densham believes advances in computer technology will revolutionize the medium. “We’re at the cusp of an extraordinary change in technology,” said Densham. “I think that we’re still four years away from when it’s going to get really extraordinary, where we can create computer-driven environments and characters. We’re able to sample images and bend flame around a sphere to make a fire planet, or take a whisp of the contrail of an F-16 and put that out of the back of a spaceship. We’re going to see worlds and creations using CGI as a storytelling medium which will be quite extraordinary.”

Densham is also working on



Jeff Kaake as Boon, the series’ fighter pilot hero cast in the adventure mold of a World War II flying ace.

another science fiction project for television, a Fox TV movie called *LIFEPOD*, based on his script, about the survivors of a star cruiser explosion, who find themselves trapped in a shuttle pod, with a sabateur, on their way to Venus. The film is directed by Ron Silver and stars Silver and Robert Loggia. Densham said he hopes enough viewers tune in to *SPACE RANGERS* on CBS to allow him to continue to chart new regions of the television universe.

“I think television understimulates people’s imaginations,” observed Densham. “At the moment there’s a lot of room for shows that take people on adventures. That isn’t a rejection of our daily life. I’d say we’re probably closer to the original *STAR TREK* which every week was a different bucket of popcorn. It was always popping off the screen with new stuff you’d never seen.” □

Richard Group as Isogul, the alien godfather of a galactic black market.



Marjorie Monaghan as Jo Jo, a tough-as-nails fighter pilot who’s just a gal.



Clint Howard, Ron Howard’s younger brother, as Doc, the Ranger’s doctor.



BRAIN

New Zealand's Peter Jackson directs

By Alan Jones

Just when you think you've seen it all, along comes Peter Jackson's BRAINDEAD, the ultimate blood feast in horror history. Forget Jackson's other two exercises in cutting-edge gross-out sleaze, BAD TASTE and MEET THE FEEBLES. In fact, forget every splatter film you've ever seen because the New Zealander's latest "splatstick" nightmare has no precedent anywhere in the Grand Guignol genre. Jackson redefines the gore movie by going all the way—then two steps beyond. His outrageously hilarious zombie shocker gives new meaning to the term excessive. The most talked about film at the 1992 Cannes Festival, Jackson's BRAINDEAD is a *gore-de-force*. Trimark Pictures tentatively planned to open the film, retitled DEAD ALIVE, in January.

Lionel's mom rips off the arms of a Hell's Angel in a cemetery massacre, cutting-edge gross-out sleaze.



Lionel's bedridden undead mom (Elizabeth Moody) attacks the nurse sent to tend her.

Starring Kiwi TV comedian Timothy Balme and veteran New Zealand stage actress Elizabeth Moody, BRAINDEAD outlines the manic mayhem that occurs when browbeaten Lionel's mother is turned into a drooling zombie after being bitten by a Sumatran rat monkey at the Wellington Zoo. The biggest special effects movie ever produced in Australasia, BRAINDEAD, according to the 31-year-old Jackson, "has more special effects than my previous two movies put together. The last half hour explodes into a frenzy of blood-soaked prosthetic effects. It's relentless!"

And relentless also describes the efforts on Jackson's part to actually get BRAINDEAD in front of the cameras. Said Jackson, "After BADTASTE, Stephen Sinclair, Frances Walsh and myself wrote this gore-drenched zombie black comedy. But the \$2.5 million budget was difficult to pull together even though the New Zealand Film Commission, who backed BAD TASTE, agreed to put up half the cost. As we couldn't raise the

remainder from private sources, we had to face the dismal reality and cancel it. We were so confident about pulling it off we were literally within a week of hiring a crew, building sets and cranking up for pre-production."

With BRAINDEAD on hold, Jackson turned all his attention to directing the far cheaper "Spluppet" show MEET THE FEEBLES, which became a reality in 1988 thanks to major Japanese investment. The BRAINDEAD postponement proved to be a blessing in

disguise. "The script benefited enormously from the enforced delay," said Jackson. "We polished it, introduced new twists, developed the extensive effects, and, in retrospect, I'm incredibly grateful." When filming eventually started on September 3rd, 1991, at the Avalon Studios in Wellington, the script was in its ninth draft.

One of the major changes made was setting the story in 1957. "It was contemporary until about three months before principal shooting began," said Jackson. "But I was always worried audiences would envision Lionel as a total nerd, a complete wimp. If they did, it wouldn't work. Once I hit on the '50s idea, I knew it was perfect, because at that time it was still possible for someone who was 25 years old to live at home without being thought of as a complete idiot. It was very important audiences didn't laugh at Lionel, just at the unbelievable stuff that happened to him." And the period shift didn't up the budget. Noted Jackson, "There are loads of old-looking locations here and vintage cars."

Jackson's aim was to have

Lionel (Timothy Balme) in the midst of the climactic zombie orgy, Jackson's ultimate blood feast, a *gore-de-force* that redefines the whole gore movie genre.



DEAD

an outrageous exercise beyond gore.

audiences identify with Lionel and his ethnic girlfriend Paquita. "It is a rot-infested romance," said Jackson. "BRAINDEAD is also a social metaphor because its theme is pretty universal. Here's this guy who lives at home with his domineering mother and, at some point, there's going to be another woman in his life. The tension is the contrast between the two women who want to get the son's attention. Ultimately, he has to decide between them."

Jackson noted that the casting of Spanish actress Diana Penlaver as Paquita, the only non-Kiwi among the cast, was the result of a co-production deal that fell through. "A Spanish producer showed a pre-sale interest in BRAINDEAD at Cannes one year," said Jackson. "We rewrote it to accommodate a co-production angle. When the deal fell through, we retained that European component because it gave the screenplay an unusual gypsy mystique."

Making the mother a zombie put a whole new spin on George Romero's walking dead horror formula. "I didn't want the zombie to be the bad guy, always chasing the good guy," said Jackson. "I chose to make the mother a zombie so Lionel can still relate to her despite the terrible things she's doing to him and the monster she's turning into. It takes him until the end of the movie to realize she's a crazed creature and not his mother anymore." At the climax, grown to Godzilla size, Lionel's mom stuffs her boy back into her womb.

While the film's characters and script are much stronger than BAD TASTE, Jackson's sense of humor is the same. "It's good-natured rather than cynical and sarcastic, like MEET THE FEEBLES," said Jack-

"I never set out to become a horror director," said Jackson. "My two major movie loves are James Bond and Ray Harryhausen stop-motion animation effects."



Jackson directs Ian Watkin in action as BRAINDEAD's zombified Uncle Les.

son. "BRAINDEAD differs from its predecessors most in being out-and-out horror. BAD TASTE was a total romp. It was never meant to be scary, whereas this one is. But it's mixed with comedy in the RE-ANIMATOR/EVILDEAD vein."

The BRAINDEAD budget was finally raised from three main sources: the New Zealand Film Commission, Japan Cinema Associates and Avalon Studios, the production base of New Zealand's top TV game shows WHEEL OF FORTUNE and SALE OF THE CENTURY. Vincent Ward shot THE NAVIGATOR there. The nine-man crew responsible for what can only be described as a special effects orgy was supervised by Richard Taylor, who did Jackson's

MEET THE FEEBLES. "BRAINDEAD was a formidable task for Taylor," said Jackson. "He had to draw up a bible containing 800 storyboards to keep everything under control."

Sydney-based Bob McCaron supervised the highly sophisticated prosthetic zombie designs and construction. His prior work includes MAD MAX 2, RAZORBACK and DEAD CALM. Said Jackson, "Bob made about 60 male/female limbs and assorted mutilated bits of bodies, cast live and sculpted, plus four Selwyns—the baby zombie which features in a comic highlight where Lionel takes him for a walk in the park. Bob also made an unusual selection of props: a fully operational, giant food blender, an embalm-

ing machine and a '50s motorized lawnmower that spurted out masses of blood." McCaron's mind-boggling inventiveness also included mobile zombie intestines with lungs for feet, the stop-motion evil Sumatran rat monkey, murderous spinal columns, half-eaten craniums that slide along in pools of blood and numerous orifices which rotting hands get plunged through. The film's extensive animatronic puppet effects are the work of Ramon Aguilar, Jackson's MEET THE FEEBLES puppet master.

With a cult success for BRAINDEAD all but assured, Jackson said he's ready for a change. "I'm sick and tired of blood at the moment," moaned the director, who only finished post-production on BRAINDEAD a breathless two days before its Cannes world premiere. "I never set out to become that sort of director. The whole cult thing is a label others have given me. I've never even sat through THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW! I just make what I enjoy watching myself, influenced by nine years sitting glued to MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS on TV."

For his next movie, Jackson is torn between two scripts he's written. One is based on a true, notorious 1954 New Zealand murder case involving lesbian schoolfriends Pauline Parker and Juliet Hulme. The other is titled BLUBBERHEAD, co-written with Danny Mulheron, Jackson's MEET THE FEEBLES collaborator. "My two major movie loves are James Bond and Ray Harryhausen's stop-motion animation work," said Jackson. "Both influenced BLUBBERHEAD, a big epic fantasy like LORD OF THE RINGS, with dragons and other fantasy creatures." □

INNOCENT BLOOD

Vamping unsafe in an age when any blood is as liable to be guilty as innocent.

By Thomas Doherty

A true marksman of the offbeat, director John Landis can aim for the funny bone or the jugular and, as often as not, hit both targets. With a few *National Lampoon* alumni and a snorting John Belushi, he virtually invented the gross-out teen-pic in *ANIMAL HOUSE*. Later, he yoked bent comedy to lycanthropy in the pioneering genre-bender *AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON*. He is also, as you need not be reminded, the sole auteur of the fantastic, accused of a quite literal murder of his own, the infamous episode of *THE TWILIGHT ZONE: THE MOVIE* that led to the death of actor Vic Morrow and two Vietnamese children in a manner as horrifying as anything in his cinematic imagination. No matter how many blockbuster Eddie Murphy comedies Landis pilots, he will be known forever after as the man whose penchant for motion picture magic crashed into real-life recklessness.

From this vantage, the title of Landis' new film—*INNOCENT BLOOD*—drips more than a little irony. But first, let's get all those irresistible hemoglobular puns out of the way. The film is tired, weak, in need of a transfusion, full of negative factors and, in a word, anemic. Or, to bleed the well dry, it sucks.

The luscious Anne Parillaud, the sleek assassin of *LE FEMME NIKITA*, plays Marie, a Pittsburgh-based vampire



John Landis (r), directing *AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON* (1981). His *INNOCENT BLOOD* was a boxoffice flop, not particularly funny or frightening.

with the stress on the vamp. Marie is a finicky eater—she likes 'em morally flawed—and is never so ravenous as to forgo destroying evidence of her vacuum-powered feeding by blasting the heads off her victims with a shotgun. In the mood for some "Italian," she haunts the downtown lairs of the local mafioso.

Married to the mob is Tony (Anthony LaPaglia), an undercover cop out to catch kingpin mobster Messillini (Robert Loggia), who, unlike Marie, is a remorseless killer, the real monster sucking the life out of the city. A leering Loggia thinks Marie will make a tasty morsel, but the hunter gets captured by the hunted and winds up the main entree on her dinner plate. Plot complication: Marie has to beat a hasty exit before decapitating de Capo. Undead on arrival but corporeally intact, Loggia wakes up on a morgue table

plenty pissed off and bewildered—understandable considering his pathologist is Frank Oz. But the godfather grasps the situation quickly and launches into a series of lunches—biting into his henchmen and turning them into vampires.

Alerted to the merging of Cosa Nostra with Nosferatu, Paglia and Parillaud (say that quick) team up to defeat the gangster and his ashen-faced legions. He is motivated by a quest for justice, she by undue competition amongst the food chain. Bestowed with supernatural strength and the power of flight, Marie roars like a tiger and her eyes get all fiery during feeding frenzies, kind of like Nastassia Kinski in *CAT PEOPLE*. Otherwise, she's a low-maintenance woman.

Like almost all succubus scenarios of the last decade, *INNOCENT BLOOD* owes as much to Anne Rice as Bram

Stoker, a shift also apparent in *THE HUNGER* (1983) and *NEAR DARK* (1987). The sex is racy and out front, the blood flows in buckets, and audience identification is with the feeder not the menu. Sketched as a breed of drug addicts, flesh junkies, and existential outsiders with an ambivalent relation to the humans they are condemned to consume, Rice-model vampires are weary, stylish and moral after their own fashion, relics of medieval superstition in a modern world which, on second thought, is not short on its own flesh peddlers and bloodsuckers. The traditional Transylvanian lore—split before sunrise, avoid garlic, go for the neck—is appropriated when atmospherically useful and jettisoned when inconvenient. Who's afraid of a crucifix in the secular '90s anyway? (Incidentally, the movie rights to Rice's *Vampire Lestat* series were once owned by producer Julia Phillips, addled author of the crash-and-burn Hollywood memoir, *You'll Never Eat Lunch in This Town Again*, an interesting title given the context. David Geffen now owns the property, in the offing for years. One can only hope *Lestat* comes to the screen before David Bowie gets too translucent.)

Landis and screenwriter Michael Wolk barely scratch the surface of one contemporary complication that neither Tod Browning nor the folks at Hammer Studios had to worry about: the convolutions of a sexy vampire in an age in which



Anne Parillaud as the film's Anne Rice-style vampire with moral compunctions.

blood signals AIDS more than the Red Cross. Not for nothing did a recent SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE sketch cast James Woods as a worried Count Dracula who fastidiously inquires about his victims' sexual history before taking the plunge neckward. Presumably, just as Marie can tell the moral righteousness of a potential victim by looking into his eyes, she can also chemically register his HIV status. When Tony and Marie shack up for the anticipated consummation between undead and live meat, the smell of unsafe sex is in the air in more ways than one. Another signpost (rather billboard) of the film's medicinal dance with sex-and-death is the inclusion of what may be a major motion picture first: a condom product placement.

Just as AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON prowled along to a syncopated lunar soundtrack ("Bad Moon Rising," "Moondance"), INNOCENT BLOOD cues its attacks to witless aural gags (e.g. Frank Sinatra singing "That Old Black Magic" as Marie zeroes in for the kill). In what has become an annoying Landis trademark, secondary characters are played by fellow Directors Guild members—Frank Oz, Sam Raimi, Tom Savini. But save for an exuberantly game performance by Loggia, the film has little of the fun-loving style and spontaneous yuks of Landis' other comedy-slash-horror films—for whatever reason, his heart doesn't seem quite into either element. Only the appearance

of insult comic Don Rickles, as Loggia's shyster lawyer, captures some of the old killer rabbit spirit. Admittedly, the leap from the legal profession to bloodsucking vampire is a trifle obvious, but seeing the physical disintegration of Rickles as beams of sunlight pour through his hospital window is strangely gratifying.

The end reel blast party is sheer post-coital letdown, excess without excitement, probably because the true climax to INNOCENT BLOOD was the vampire-human clinch. Maybe Hollywood's current crop of vampish vampires no longer have the luxury of promiscuous dining, or merely absorbing precious bodily fluids for sustenance, when everyone knows that the act, and the danger, is now a two-way street, that any blood is as liable to be guilty as innocent. □

Parillaud's taste for mafioso blood leads to an erotic encounter with undercover cop Anthony LaPaglia.



GUILTY DIRECTOR

John Landis on the filming and a return to werewolves.

By Steve Biodrowski

John Landis ended up directing INNOCENT BLOOD after another vampire film he was developing at Warner Bros fell through: RED SLEEP, an idea pitched by Mick Garris, which postulated that the "King" of Las Vegas entertainers is actually Dracula. "I wrote a script, which I really liked—it was pretty gory and had big musical numbers," said Landis.

INNOCENT BLOOD turned out to be a flop for Warners when it opened last September. The title is a steal from Anne Rice's *The Vampire Lestat*, a reference in the novel to how the vampire only preys on murderers, not "innocent blood." Landis gave French actress Anne Parillaud (star of the overrated LE FEMME NIKITA) her first English-language role as the film's moralistic vampire, named Marie to account for her accent.

"I called her in Paris," recalled Landis. "I'm much better thought of in Europe than in this country, so for her it was a big deal to work with me." Landis felt Parillaud would ensure audience sympathy for the character.

"What Anne does in LE FEMME NIKITA is remarkable: the character is a hateful junkie, an incredible low-life murderess; by the end of the movie, you love her. She has this incredible ability to be hard and tough and totally vulnerable and sympathetic at the same time. [INNOCENT BLOOD] works because of

her. If you didn't believe her, you wouldn't believe the movie. Something I'm very pleased about is that she does lots of superhuman stuff in the movie, and you never question the character's ability to do it; you just buy it. That's Anne—she's a wonderful actress."

Less wonderful were the shooting conditions in Pittsburgh, which added weeks to the original 10-week schedule. "It was so cold! I've made 16 movies and never had to reshoot anything except the one night it snowed so hard that the snow would cover the arc lamps and change the exposure," said Landis.

Another challenge was completing the film's effects with mechanics rather than opticals, *ala* AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON. A particularly difficult effect was the disintegration of Don Rickles by Steve Johnson, inspired by the conclusion of HORROR OF DRACULA.

Though happy with the film, Landis was not happy about the MPAA-mandated cuts. "We had a terrible struggle to get an R-rating, so I had to cut about four minutes out for the United States," he said.

Landis noted that his next genre effort will be a sequel to AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON. "Polygram, who put up the money for the original, asked me if I would do a sequel," said Landis. "I've just finished the script. It takes place exactly 12 years later and involves most of the people from the first one, even though a lot of them are dead." □

BRAM STOKER'S *Dracula*

Francis Ford Coppola on adapting Stoker's gothic masterpiece for the '90s.

By Steve Biodrowski

Confident that his approach would distinguish BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA from its filmic forebears, director Francis Coppola was not adverse to the occasional homage. Noted the director, "My father taught us to 'steal from the best!' So anything that we could steal—which is to say, the early films of Murnau and others—we did, as usual. Certainly, the film is very indebted to the great silent filmmakers and to Jean Cocteau, whose inspiration makes you want to make movies."

With the novel's large cast of characters, none developed with a great deal of depth, Coppola credited his actors for preventing the virtuous Victorian vampire hunters from lapsing into generic stereotypes. "The book has certain flaws," said Coppola, "which is maybe the reason everyone shied away from fully dramatizing it. It's hard to have a lot of characters in any movie.

Without totally re-inventing the story, once the mortal characters had played their cards, I was slicing thin in order to keep everyone involved. I tried to do that with as much care as possible, and I think we had some good performances."

A performance which Coppola singled out for praise in overcoming difficulties with the original text is that of Anthony Hopkins as Van Helsing. "Having this extraordinary guy helped," said Coppola. "We took an unusual tact with Van Helsing. He is an extremely idiotic character in the book—he's a bumbler, and he never stops talking. I really didn't think contemporary audiences would get with him, and he's never much good in any of the other DRACULAs either. (I've seen snippets of Olivier playing him.) It's a problem character. So I sort of based him on Goethe but made him more like a Walter Brennan Goethe. He's a little mad. He's much more



Coppola directs Gary Oldman as the vanquished Dracula.

of a character than in the book and he comes off great. You know, the same words and everything—just the way we portrayed him, the way Anthony used some of his own madness. I think Van Helsing is pretty successful."

One character who did undergo noticeable rewriting is Lucy Westenra (Sadie Frost), whose Victorian naivete gave way to a somewhat anachronistic licentiousness that is the envy and embarrassment of her friend Mina (Winona Ryder). "I think that's one of the things [scriptwriter] Jim [Hart] added to the story. These girls are always giggling about sex," said Coppola. "My theory was that a vampire would almost be drawn to that kind of young concupiscence, as if he could smell the blood rushing in them, the menstrual blood. In other words, Dracula will be drawn to passion because 'passion' is just another way of saying 'life,' and he feeds

on life."

Another problem character was Jonathan Harker, who, despite being the real hero of Stoker's book, has never emerged in a particularly memorable way on screen. "It's because Jonathan Harker has that second-act problem," said Coppola. "He gets left in the castle and interest goes to other parts of the story. Then later on he escapes and ultimately is the one who pursues and kills Dracula. You have a choice of whether or not you want to invent a lot of stuff or do what the book did, which is to take him up to that point where he is imprisoned. I did it that way, rather than get myself too far out on a limb, because there are a lot of characters and I have two hours to do all this, so I didn't want to invent a whole bunch of stuff that I would have to cut out later."

Hart's romantic approach to the script turns Stoker's Count into a sort of fallen angel who chooses damnation after his wife's suicide. "I liked the idea that in some way it was the story of Lucifer," said Coppola about the film's underlying theme. "It's a story about God, too. It tries, as does FRANKENSTEIN, to address that we're human beings looking up at this bizarre cosmos, trying to figure out our place in it and what God wants from us. Whenever you deal with the Satanic, just as in the story of Lucifer, God is a very powerful character—because, ultimately, it's in trying to reconcile ourselves with our idea of God that we face our greatest challenge.

"I made the movie pretty much just with my heart," summed up Coppola. "I'm not the kind of person who would take an analytic approach. If I tried to analyze the novel, it would fall apart on me, so I made it with the same spirit in which I read the book to kids at camp when I was a drama counselor." □



The road to Dracula's castle, live action composited with a matte painting by Brian Flora. Below: The live action portion of the shot, filmed at the old MGM (now Sony/Columbia) soundstages in Culver City. Bottom: At Matte World, Flora paints the final details while camera assistant Rick McKay checks the focus.

MATTE ARTISTRY

Painting vistas of horror at San Rafael's Matte World.

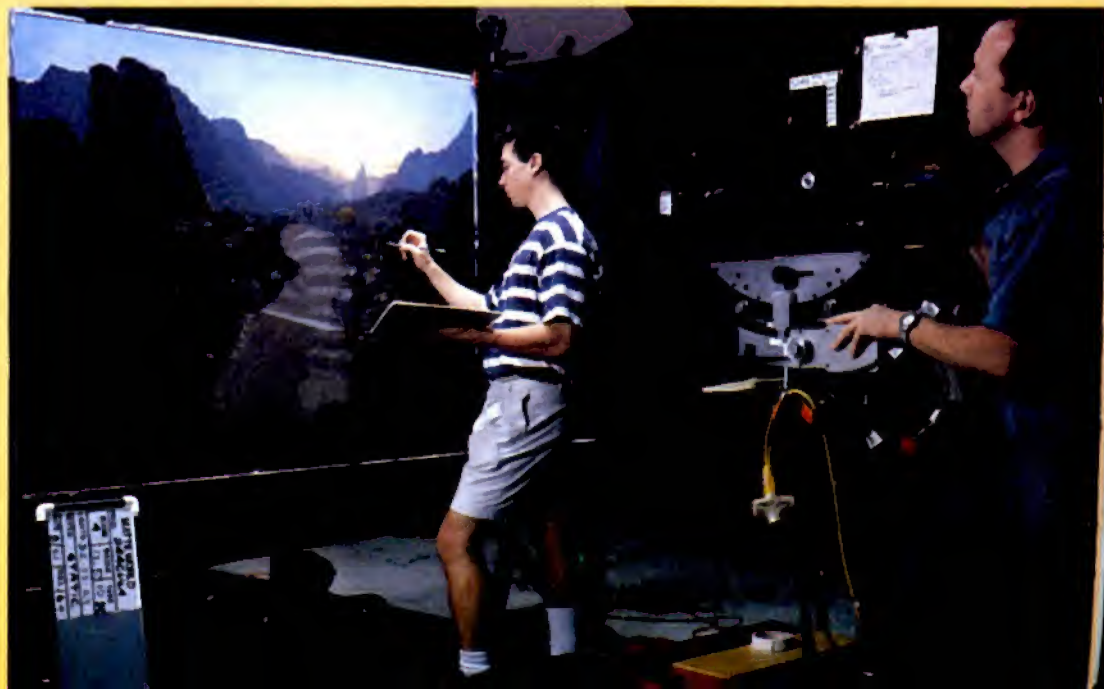
By Lawrence French

Francis Coppola's new version of DRACULA features 13 extraordinary shots created by Matte World, the northern California effects house that specializes in intricate miniatures as well as high quality matte paintings. Coppola chose to re-create the broken battlements of castle Dracula with miniatures and mattes, just as Universal had done for the Tod Browning/Bela Lugosi version 61 years before.

Mentor Huebner, the noted production illustrator who has worked on such films as FORBIDDEN PLANET and LORD OF THE RINGS, provided the initial sketches of the castle. "It was supposed to look ancient," said Michael Pangra-

zio, who directed the effects photography of the miniature. "They wanted it to subliminally resemble a man sitting on a throne, looking up towards the heavens, with a claw-like hand. It's a rather unique concept, so it took some time to get the look they wanted."

Matte World model maker Jack Haye built the castle in miniature, assisted by Pangrazio, working from conceptual art by Sean Joyce. "The moon was just a circle cut out of our sky backing," said Pangrazio of the establishing shot early in the film. "We had a sheet of glass with some Vaseline on it, between the model and the camera, to flare out the moonlight. The moving clouds were suspended on horizontal wires attached to a motorized track,





Van Helsing escorts Mina to Dracula's castle. Left: Matte World artist Bill Mather blends the line where the art and film image meet. Above: The final composite.



Chasing Dracula's wagon to the castle gates, mattes painted by Brian Flora (top) and Bill Mather (below). Left: Matte World camera operator Wade Childress films the baby powder snow falling from troughs, double exposed high speed.



so we could control their speed. For the torches at the gate of the castle we used tiny light-bulbs stacked up together. When they flash on and off randomly, they appear like flames to the camera."

The castle viewed by Mina and Harker at the end of the film matches Stoker's description almost perfectly: "... We were in perfect desolation, and, so far as we could see through the snowfall, there was not even the sign of a habitation... We looked and saw where the clear line of Dracula's castle cut the sky. We saw it in all its grandeur, perched a thousand feet on the summit of a sheer precipice and with seemingly a great gap between it and the steep slope of the adjacent mountain on any side. There was something wild and uncanny about the place."

The addition of a fine powdery snowfall helps the shot achieve a poetic beauty, reminiscent of Cocteau's *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*, yet at the same time it exudes a sinister foreboding. "It was all accomplished through lighting effects and the lens position," said Pangrazio. "We backlit the snow with warm light and then bathed the background in cool blue light, so you get a dynamic of the two colors working together."

For a spectacular "bat's eye" view of the castle and the surrounding river gorge, Pangrazio combined the castle minia-

ture with a live-action plate of Van Helsing and Mina as well as his matte painting of the Arges river that runs around the castle. Said Pangrazio, "There was a little velvet circle on the castle courtyard where the live-action was to go, so we could light the surrounding area with a warm glow. This way it looked like the light from the campfire was hitting the castle walls. We used a key light on the castle to suggest the light of a full moon."

A second miniature was built to provide a point-of-view shot as Harker stands in the courtyard and gazes upward at the immense structure. "That model was carved out of foam in three separate sections," said Craig Barron, Pangrazio's Matte World partner. "That allowed us to put scrim layers between the sections, making the top of the castle appear hazier as it recedes away from you. We have three torches, with little light bulbs behind them, that combine with a separate flame element which is projected into the scene. We used our motion-control system to film another pass to add flickering shadows from the torches on the surface of the castle walls. We like to add elements of reality into the shots as much as possible, to give the shot greater credibility."

As a reference for the paintings of the Carpathian mountains surrounding the castle, Brian Flora drove to the Sierra



Right: Dracula's castle, as conceived by director Francis Ford Coppola, was to resemble a man on a throne, looking up towards Heaven, an image worthy of Stoker.

Nevadas and took pictures of the snow-capped peaks, including Mount Whitney, the highest mountain in the contiguous United States. "That really established our look," said Flora, "except for the sky, which needed to be more dramatic. Even though it's a fantasy, we have to make it look real."

Flora painted the matte for the film's prologue, set in 1462. Vlad Dracula has won a battle against the invading Turkish army and ordered the survivors impaled on wooden stakes.

Flora's painting shows castle Dracula in the distance with a narrow twisting road surrounded by the impaled Turks that leads through the mountains to the castle. "The sun is added to this shot from behind with a separate pass on our motion-control camera," said Barron. "We used a zoom lens with a lot of elements in it to get a lens flare from the sun. It adds character to the shot, a feeling of haze, so you don't see everything too clearly."

To combine live-action with the matte paintings, "We use

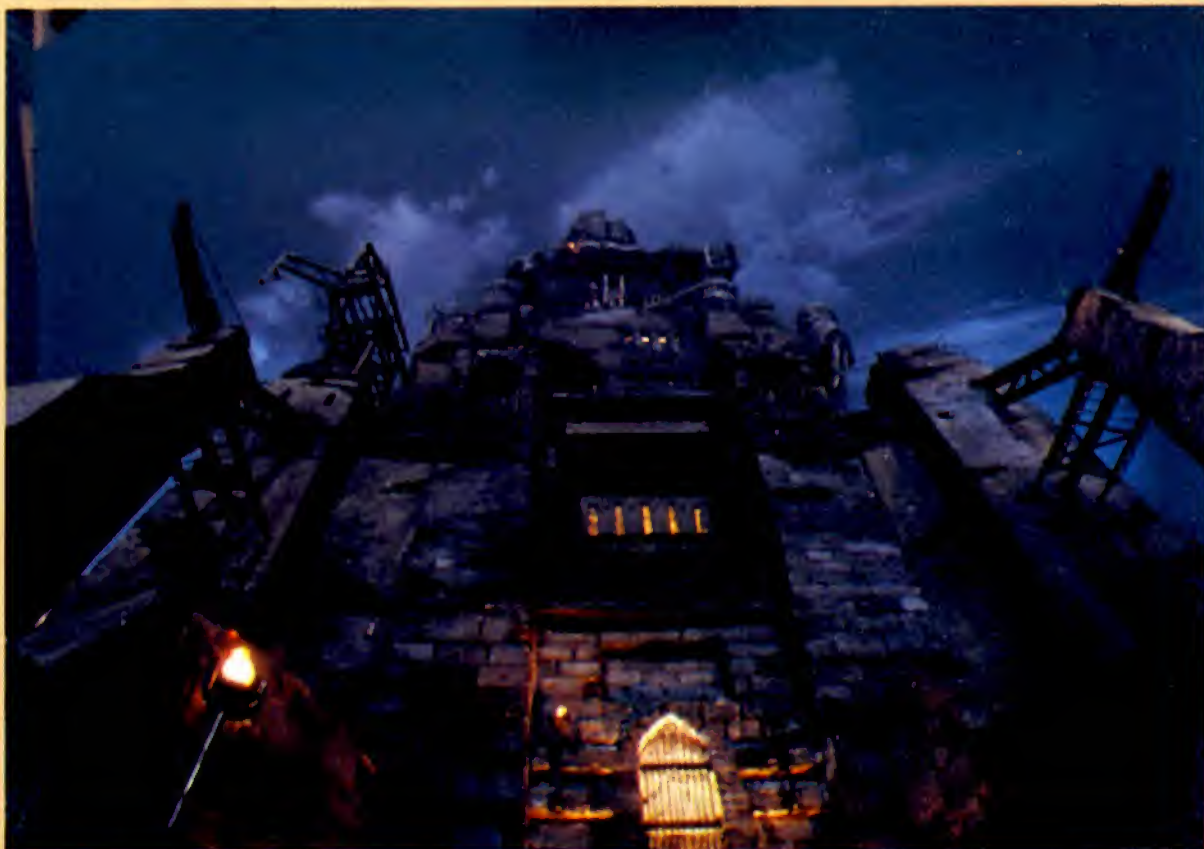
the latent-image process," said artist Bill Mather. This is the favored method at Matte World, which provides a beautifully composited image by shooting the live action and the matte on the same piece of film, by simply rewinding it in the camera. "Actually, Coppola is very much into modern technology, so when we first met with him, he was surprised we were still using the latent-image technique," said effects cameraman Wade Childress. "They had tried to do some of the [castle] shots on the stage

at Sony studios."

Perhaps the most difficult shots to accomplish were the matte paintings of the castle, which were combined with both live-action plates as well as a gently falling snow. These scenes come near the end of the film, as Dracula is pursued back to his castle by Dr. Seward and Quincey Morris. The live-action consists of Szgany Gypsies escorting the Count's coffin on a horse-drawn leiter-wagon. Brian Flora painted the first shot, while Bill Mather painted the



Looking up from the base of Dracula's castle, a Matte World miniature built by Jack Haye and Michael Pangrazio. Left: Effects supervisor Craig Barron (l) checks the internal lighting as camera operator Cameron Noble applies detail paint. Bottom Left: Camera assistant Rick McKay (l) and Barron prepare to shoot the tilt up-angle. The scrim is used to create aerial haze.





Matte World's moving camerawork tilts up to follow the carriage of Dracula as it arrives at the castle. Inset: The live-action element filmed on Sony's soundstages. Director Francis Ford Coppola called on Matte World to create 13

extraordinary matte shots for BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA. The San Rafael-based effects company headed by Craig Barron and Michael Pangrazio used a latent image technique which combined the mattes and live footage first generation.

second scene, showing the wagon as it approaches the gates of the castle.

"How we did that actually sounds a bit insane," said Childress. "We took our live-action plate and composited it with the matte painting, but before we processed it, we rewound the film so we had a film that was double-latent. Then we put the film in a high-speed camera and shot two passes of the falling snow with our motion-control system at 72 f.p.s. It's still all done very much as a live shot. We had people shaking talcum powder down through a specific wire mesh screen to create our

snowfall. The snow was set in layers, so by doing the pass twice, we were able to give the shots a strong illusion of depth. It really takes nerves of steel, combined with a *laissez-faire* attitude as we only have a limited number of takes we can use. We have about 60 feet of test film, without any action, that we can use to match the exposures. Then you have to be able to composite the shot, because the action starts."

The artists at Matte World said it was a marvelous experience working with Roman and Francis Coppola. "We trust each other, so we're able to show Roman things that are very unfinished," said Barron. "Normally a client might get nervous if we show them an

unfinished shot, but with the Coppolas we've shown them shots earlier than we ever have before. We're also located right between Coppola's house in Napa Valley and his Zoetrope offices in San Francisco. That makes it easy for them to stop by here and talk to us, see the work in progress and let us know their concerns. Francis came here for a visit, made some comments and toured our facilities. While Coppola was here he said, 'You guys wouldn't be here if it weren't for me.' What he meant was that he was the one who brought George Lucas up to San Francisco to work at American Zoetrope. Then when George started ILM on his own, we all came up here to

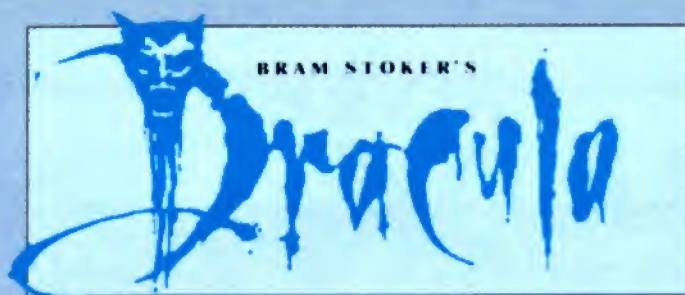
work. So Francis was the original impetus in this long chain of events that brought us to the bay area."

Gary Oldman, who plays Dracula, told *Premiere* magazine he didn't think audiences would see the entire castle. No doubt Oldman was quite surprised when he viewed the completed film, in which the illustrious illusionism by the wizards of Matte World make us believe once again "that there are such things." □



Left: A bird's eye view of Van Helsing and Mina camped at the castle promontory, a painting of the river gorge by Mike Pangrazio, combined with the castle model and a live-action plate (inset) shot on the Matte World stages. Right: Camera assistant Drummond Stone (l), effects supervisor Pangrazio and key grip Todd R. Smith (r) prepare to shoot Dracula's castle under a full moon, composite above.





REVIVING AN UNDEAD CAREER

Coppola sucks the life out of Stoker's hoary classic.

By Thomas Doherty

This is Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, not Bela Lugosi's, not Christopher Lee's, definitely not Samuel Z. Arkoff's—not even the *Dracula* of that famous three-named, bearded bear of an auteur, Francis Ford Coppola. Linking the public domain surname with its Gothic lineage seems a calculated bid for prestige and literary respectability, the kind of thing classic Hollywood used to do with Booth Tarkington or James Hilton novels. The aim is to douse expectations of low-budget splatter by embracing the proper Victorian roots of linear narrative and thematic coherence. It worked. *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA* is FFC's comeback kid—his biggest hit ever and a crowd-pleasing lark through the dark that evaporates from consciousness the minute you exit the theatre lobby.

Coppola, who, after all, began his career as a Roger Corman protege with the bare bones horror flick *DEMENTIA 13* and who, come to think of it, ended *THE GODFATHER* with Marlon Brando mimicking a vampire with orange peels for teeth, may have turned to the well-trammeled legend as a way to stoke his own creative juices and awaken a flatline career from the ranks of the undead. Throughout the Reagan-Bush era, the man who made some of the most brilliant films of the '70s—*THE GODFATHERS* twinpack, *THE CONVERSATION*, *APOCALYPSE NOW*—was by turns mediocre, quirky, and dreadful. The teencake posing of the rebels without a clue in *THE OUTSIDERS* and *RUMBLE FISH*, the brainless *ONE FROM THE HEART*, the upscale smugness of his episode of *NEW YORK STORIES*, the abortive *GODFATHER III*—all were cinematic experiences as fuzzy and detached as the video playback system FFC used on his sets. Evidence suggests the maestro works best when he can anchor his operatic flourishes to a secure reef—the difference between sleeping with the fishes in *THE GODFATHER* and being up the river without an ending in *APOCALYPSE NOW*. With *BSD*, FFC is tied to a known myth and its classic source—a constraint that serves him well.

A moody prelude depicts Vlad the Impaler (Gary Oldman in his first incarnation) taking the plunge into satanic immortality, as the blood machine from *THE SHINING* kicks in. Fast forward a few centuries and *Dracula* (Oldman II) is a decaying old codger with a short fuse, a mean cackle, and a shadow that won't stay still. Inside the castle, Coppola has a blast flashing cinematic smoke and mirrors like a carnival con artist. In sleepy London town Lucy (Sadie Frost) does the nasty with a wolf-



Dracula (Gary Oldman) and Mina (Winona Ryder), a virgin on the make seduces the Prince of Darkness.

beast (Oldman III), her low blood count and mad ravings attracting the ministrations of Professor Abraham Van Helsing (Anthony Hopkins), who prescribes first transfusion and second decapitation.

The beautiful Mina (Winona Ryder), a live ringer for Vlad's late wife, gets *Dracula's* blood up. Dressed like a Carnaby Street fop with flowing locks and Roger McGuinn shades, the now gorgeous Count (Oldman IV) stalks her through the streets of London, purring exotic one-liners and plying her with absinthe. Naturally, she falls for his Eurotrash magnetism. The interesting thing about Mina is that she's ripe for corruption, virginal, but on the make. *Dracula* has no trouble getting her intoxicated on his reckless romanticism. Mina embraces her damnation and in the end seduces *Dracula*; she vamps him.

Like the book, the movie sets its medieval atmospherics against a Victorian world on the cusp of 20th-century future shock. Coppola deploys, anachronistically at times, a full range of technological innovations in embryo—teletype, phonographs, voice recording, and motion pictures (this last to nice effect, rendering *Dracula's* arrival in London in sepia-toned, frame-jumping silent film style). The *Dracula*

legend was a last gasp outpouring of superstition in the European mind, the dreamwork of culture projecting its palpitations about modernism back to the 15th century, across the Continent to backward Transylvania, where torch-bearing peasants break into castles to drive a stake through the heart of a decaying aristocracy.

The acting is mainly first rate and everyone seems to be into his or her vamp. Gary Oldman is up for the Count, this role being the logical endgame for an actor who cut his teeth on Sid Vicious and Lee Harvey Oswald. Keanu Reeves as Jonathan Harker plays the stiff second banana after the manner of his turn in *DANGEROUS LIAISONS*. As a leading lady-in-black, Winona Ryder was more alluringly mysterious as the Gothic adolescent in *BETLEJUICE*. On the erotic meter, Sadie Frost buries her. Alternatively too still and too laid back, Ryder and Reeves seem noticeably out of place and time, like they've wandered off the set of *BEVERLY HILLS 90210*. Of course, the actor who hovers over the whole enterprise is Bela Lugosi, not the Lugosi of Tod Browning's 1931 version, but the Baroque Lugosi in his Abbott and Costello period. Hungarian pronunciations—*Drach-oo-la*—can only encourage snickering (though again the Americans are more convincing at the Balkan than the British accents.)

Throughout, the film is unfailingly stylish and inventive, laconic and ghoulishly amusing. Hopkins gets the best lines—his idea of charming dinner table conversation is to discuss cutting off heads and taking out hearts. Equally playful and at ease, FFC is not above the cheap jump cut—from a rolling head to a round chunk of pot roast. The effects are pleasantly retrograde, especially the illustrated map lines that trace the vampire hit team's travels through Europe. Its geriatric ambiance, however, owes a good deal to Werner Herzog's creepy *NOSFERATU*, which featured the inimitable Klaus Kinski, the late, lamented "demon of the cinema," in the Oldman role.

Since no modern day vampire story is complete without an AIDS subtext (cf. *INNOCENT BLOOD*), *BSD* makes much of its blood transfusions and sea-of-love fluid exchanges. But its fidelity to Victorian manners breaks through in the final reel with a twilight dash to the castle, the defeat of sorcery by science, and a solid heart-stopping (and heart-stomping) climax. By the time Mina performs the *coup de grace* on her supine, smoked-out significant other, it has dawned on the skeptical spectator that with *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA*, Francis Ford Coppola has finally hit upon a heart of darkness he can drive his stake straight into. □

FILM RATINGS

- Must See
- Excellent
- Good
- Mediocre
- Poor

ALADDIN

Directed by John Musker & Ron Clements. Buena Vista. 11/92, 90 mins. With Scott Weinger, Robin Williams, Linda Larkin, Jonathan Freeman.

Another smash hit for Disney. Although he makes a late appearance, Robin Williams' Genie steals the show in an obviously ad-libbed performance, abetted by clever animation that caricatures the various celebrities Williams impersonates. The result has a very contemporary feel (even Aladdin wants to be called "Al"). One wonders how well this film will hold up in, say, 20 years, especially in the absence of any memorable numbers from songwriters Alen Menken, Tim Rice and the late Howard Ashman. Perhaps its most winning character is the magic carpet. Although completely featureless, it manages to convey more emotions than most live-action heroes.

●●● Judith P. Harris

CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT

Directed by Tony Randel. Columbia TriStar Video. 11/92, 90 mins. With: Karen Black, Peter DeLuise, Garrett Morris.

Is there anything new and different which can revitalize the vampire-film genre? Based on the flood of recent releases—all more or less variations of the same old thing—probably not. This film includes a few minor twists (some of the vampires sleep under water, some are enclosed in a slimy cocoon) but it's basically familiar stuff. The touch of a cross pendant revives a dormant vampire, who proceeds to infect an entire town with his curse,

Carlos Villarias as Dracula, with Lupita Tovar, in MCA/Universal's restoration of the '31 Spanish version.



David Sawyer as Czakyr in CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT, makeup by KNB Efx.

with the exception of a teenage girl (Amy Dolenz) and the local wino (Garrett Morris). Alerted by a priest (who keeps vampire Karen Black and her vampire daughter locked up, feeding them live leeches), schoolteacher Peter DeLuise ventures into the town to fight the undead. Not good enough to be seriously entertaining or bad enough to be campy. For vampire completists only.

● David Wilt

CRITTERS 4

Directed by Rupert Harvey. New Line Home Video. 10/92, 94 mins. With: Don Keith Oppen, Paul Whitthorne, Brad Dourif.

The latest installment in one of the better recent series is a considerable step below its predecessors. Most of the film takes place 50-odd years in the future on a derelict space station. This makes the Critters just another variation on the ALIEN theme and unfortunately robs them of much of their charm and interest. The new sequel begins as the clumsy Charlie (Don Keith Oppen) accidentally locks himself and two Critter eggs in a space capsule, which blasts off into space and promptly goes astray. Fifty years later, it's picked up by a space-going salvage ship and delivered to a space station owned by a mega-corporation that wants to use the Critters as a weapon. It is all very familiar ground from there on. To be fair, production values and design are very good, but the cast is nondescript and even the Critters have little to do. Removing them from contemporary American settings was a drastic step and an unfortunate one which seems to sound this series' death knell.

● David Wilt

DR. GIGGLES

Directed by Manny Coto. Universal Pictures/Largo Entertainment. 10/92, 95 mins. With: Larry Drake, Holly Marie Combs, Cliff De Young, Glenn Quinn.

Over a dozen years after its release, John Carpenter's HALLOWEEN continues to leave its mark on contemporary horror. The premise of an escaped mental patient returning to his hometown has become so prevalent that one can either groan at its return or slide comfortably into it like a favorite

old chair. Manny Coto's feature directing debut is likely to inspire both reactions from the devout. Coto's talent often obscures the fact that the screenplay is an array of clichés. His most impressive moment is a chase sequence set in a hall of mirrors, a perfect balance of laughs and chills which often eludes the rest of the picture. Giggles' one-liners are funny at first, but after a few murders, grow tiresome quickly. The audience never shares the surprise of the victims, making the murder sequences neither scary nor particularly funny.

●● Jim Hemphill

DRACULA (Spanish 1931)

Directed by George Melford. MCA/Universal. 10/92, 104 mins. With: Carlos Villarias, Lupita Tovar, Eduardo Arozamena, Pablo Alvarez Rubio.

Universal video unearths the rarely seen Spanish version of DRACULA, made in 1931 on the same sets as the Tod Browning version that starred Bela Lugosi. Time has not been kind to the Browning version, which appears very stagebound and stiff, and the Spanish version was long rumored to be more fluid and atmospheric. This proves not to be the case. Carlos Villarias, in the title role, is neither charming nor menacing, two things at which Lugosi excelled. Villarias as Dracula tends to open his eyes wide and purse his lips which makes him look laughable. Pablo Alvarez Rubio is fine as Renfield once he goes mad and gets to laugh maniacally, but is equally bad in the opening sequence. Eduardo Arozamena is the spitting image of Edward Van Sloan, the Browning version's Van Helsing, always spying on the heroine, here called Eva (instead of Mina), played by Lupita Tovar.

One reason to catch this is for the wonderful sets of Castle Dracula in the beginning and Carfax Abbey at the end—huge, deep and detailed, although the armadillos that lent an eeriness to the Browning version are missing. The Spanish version suffers from the same problems that plague the Browning, a dull mid-section set mainly in the drawing room of Dr. Seward's sanatorium and from the fact that all of the interesting action, such as the staking of Lucy,

occurs off-screen or behind Dracula's modestly raised cape. Subtitles would have been nice.

● Judith P. Harris

LITTLE NEMO: ADVENTURES IN SLUMBERLAND

Directed by Misami Hata. Hemdale. 7/92, 85 mins. With: Gabriel Damon, Mickey Rooney, Rene Auberjonois, Danny Mann.

This animated film had a lot of talent tied up in it. Ray Bradbury is credited with the original concept. Jean Mobius Giraud, a famous European cartoonist, is credited with the original story, along with Yukata Fujioka, and was also in charge of creative design. The screenplay is by Chris Columbus (HOME ALONE) and Richard Outten (PET SEMATARY II). Melissa Manchester sings the title song, written by Richard and Robert Sherman (THE JUNGLE BOOK). The talent, unfortunately, appears to have been wasted.

The comic strip on which the film is based was written and drawn by Winsor McCay in New York from about 1905-1928. McCay, now known only to historians, was immensely popular and influential during his life. One of America's earliest animators, McCay used an animated short of LITTLE NEMO as part of his vaudeville act. Much of the design work, especially where modeled on McCay's originals, is very good. But several of McCay's characters are changed for no good reason. McCay's Princess Camilla and Nemo now look too much like children from a Disney cartoon. The quality of the animation is workman-like but unexciting, done with little charm.

● William Wilson Goodson Jr.

MIDNIGHT'S CHILD

Directed by Colin Bucksey. Lifetime Cable TV. 4/92, 120 min. With: Marcy Walker, Olivia D'Abo, Cotter Smith.

A TV movie, this time an imitation of THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE, with Satan-worshipping thrown in. Olivia D'Abo is a Swedish *au pair* who tries to claim Marcy Walker and Cotter Smith's daughter for the devil's bride. No real suspense or thrills (and basically no real supernatural content). Hard-driving career woman Walker (a lawyer) neglects her familial duties, then turns shrewish and paranoid over D'Abo's popularity and competence. The moral here seems to be: if you are a working mother, your husband and child will go to the devil (literally). The film presents Walker as more assertive and competent than out-of-work, house-husband Smith. At the climax, it is Walker who clobbers Satan's minions, after Smith has been easily subdued. Another point of interest: Smith is an artist and under D'Abo's influence, he paints a gruesome family portrait, which seems to be an H.R. Giger painting (or a good imitation). Too bad the rest of the film is so bland.

● David Wilt

PALE BLOOD

Directed by W. Dachin Hsu. RCA/Columbia Video. 10/92, 93 mins. With: George Chakiris, Wings Hauser, Pamela Ludwig, Diana Frank.

For about two minutes the idea of George Chakiris as a vampire seemed like a good one, as he moved with a



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dancer's grace beneath the opening credits. But the monotony of his two facial expressions quickly wore thin. Surely it would have been better to have cast an actor. A serial killer is staging phony vampire murders to trap a real vampire. The few vampires left are lonely and forced to hang out at singles bars indulging in one night stands. There is one amusing idea: Chakiris travels light with a portable coffin that collapses into a suitcase. Wings Hauser gives his usual over-the-top performance and carries on a running commentary with himself, just like those annoying people who sit behind you in the movies and feel compelled to narrate what's happening. Perhaps this movie is aimed at them.

o Judith P. Harris

PROJECT: SHADOWCHASER

Directed by John Eyres. Prism Video. 7/92, 93 mins. With: Martin Kove, Meg Foster, Joss Ackland.

Bare-faced DIE HARD clone, with a touch of THE TERMINATOR thrown in to qualify it as science fiction. A group of terrorists, led by a rogue government-created android, seize a high-rise hospital and take hostages, including the President's daughter (Meg Foster). The FBI mistakenly frees Martin Kove (believing he is the building architect) from suspended animation (the latest method of imprisonment). Kove is actually an ex-football player, but he manages to decimate the terrorists, despite the exasperated instructions of the FBI, and the android's creator (Joss Ackland), to lay low. Well-produced and acted, but the script is such a blatant copy of DIE

HARD that it's a miracle legal action wasn't taken. The inclusion of the "invincible" android makes little difference, since the character seems like just another psycho terrorist until the very end of the film when his invulnerability is briefly demonstrated (then overcome). Shot in England and Vancouver, with the cast trying hard to imitate Americans. Some talent is evident here, but wasted on a rip-off concept.

• David Wilt

THE REFRIGERATOR

Directed by Nichols A.E. Jacobs. Avenue D Films Ltd. 9/92. 87 mins. With: David Simonds, Julia McNeal, Angel Caban, Nena Segal.

The titular appliance is your basic gateway to hell. Sometimes it looks like a normal, if beaten up, fridge, and sometimes when it's possessed, it sprouts a moist maw and jungly tendrils. All the better to suck in its victims. Naturally, a New York landlord is in cahoots with the devil and rents the apartment where this fridge dwells for only \$200 a month, which makes this more science fiction than horror. Sadly, this is about as bizarre as the plot gets. People disappear with slightly less regularity than in your average slasher movie, and with all of the telltale bloodstains magically removed. Waiting for the deaths to occur is excruciating as everyone, especially heroine Julia McNeal, is lethargic. Angel Caban gives an interesting performance as the film's quirkiest character, a Bolivian flamenco dancer who is the building's leather-and-chain-wearing super. Everyone else should keep their day job.

• Judith P. Harris

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LETTERS

LOOK OUT "STAR TREK"

After reading Mark A. Altman's February issue coverage of *BABYLON 5* [23:5:17], I have the gut feeling, too, this TV series will be the one that finally "knocks off" *STAR TREK*, or at the very least gives *DEEP SPACE NINE* tough competition. I didn't come away with this inclination from other previews of *B-5* in other publications. Judging from the imagination exhibited in the costumes, makeup, special effects, set designs, et al., and thanks to the producer's "science fiction friendly" attitude, *BABYLON 5* looks to be a genre winner.

Al Christensen
Tacoma, WA 98409

MARY LAMBERT'S ROCK VIDEOS

Thomas Doherty [23:5:54] should call the Directors Guild to complain that Mary Lambert got screwed: the directors who were overpaid for directing Madonna's two videos for "Papa Don't Preach" and "Open Your Heart" are definitely *not* Mary Lambert! "Papa" is from James Foley (*AT CLOSE RANGE*), while "Heart" is the spawn of some foreign bloke (Italian, we recall). Whatever happened to fact-checkers? These are facts any amateur scribe could effortlessly check by going to any video shop where the collection of Madonna's videos lists who directed which one!

S. C. Dacy
Los Angeles, CA 90046

[I do so hate to be corrected on a matter of Madonna scholarship, but what with the new *Sex* book, the new *Erotica* CD, the new videos, and the new movie, the thought of exposing myself, as it were, to the *Boy Toy*'s archives was

utterly intolerable.—Doherty]

OPEN LETTER TO DAVID GILER

It was with great interest that I read Alan Jones' *ALIEN 3* post-mortem [23:4:6].

I'm the author of the "Alien Vs. Predator" script that Alan mentioned "Fox definitely has." It's a spec script, written in mid-'91, just as *ALIEN 3* was filming. The screenplay was handed over to [producer] Larry Gordon by my agent at William Morris in September of that year. It was enthusiastically received by everybody involved, and has already led to work elsewhere.

A friend, Finnish film journalist Juhani Nurmi, met David Giler at the *ALIEN 3* press junket in Germany several months ago. Juhani confirmed to me that David had not at that point read my screenplay, and was—as Alan correctly reported—maintaining his stance on further "pureline" *ALIEN* pictures.

As a genuine fan of the genre, I would love to see a continuation of either the *ALIEN* or *PREDATOR* series, and I absolutely agree with David that there's a wealth of material to be mined. But the point I think David is missing—despite the recently touted *ALIEN 3* trade grosses of \$175,000,000—is that thanks to its negative critical reception, it's going to be difficult to convince the general movie-going public to even want to see another *ALIEN*.

And that's where "Alien Vs. Predator" comes in. I firmly reject the assertion that the project is a cynical "paint-by-numbers" studio development deal. My intention was to take a concept with a great hook—already established on film by the *PREDATOR 2* tro-

phy-case in-joke scene—and translate it into a terrific movie with all the "smash, bang, wallop" that audiences enjoyed in *ALIENS*.

I hope I've managed to achieve that. If "Alien Vs. Predator" is a great success, it'll allow Fox to continue both *ALIEN* and *PREDATOR* series *independently of each other*, as David wants. And then everybody wins. Without that chance, it would seem that—like Ripley—both series are doomed to perpetual video oblivion.

Pete Briggs
London, ENGLAND

AND HE'S A FAN!

I have been a fan of *THE NEXT GENERATION* since the beginning, even through the lean times. I have found your episode guides [23:2/3:35] interesting and informative. While I have not always agreed with your awarding of points to various episodes, I am glad that you took the time to do so. Now here is the tough question: Is the sixth season of *THE NEXT GENERATION* as bad as I think it is? I have been unimpressed with the episodes so far. It started off on the wrong note with Data's head rolling around San Francisco and has not improved. Even the Scotty episode, which might have been a classic, wallowed in self-pity for much too long. The most recent, with Q and the "new Q" was bland and as flat and lifeless visually. Is the show being lit by a new team? Have all the old production crew members deserted ship for *DEEP SPACE NINE*? What is going on?

Matthew Mielke
Birmingham, AL 35254

[The best of *THE NEXT GENERATION* has traditionally shown up at the end of each season. There's still hope.]

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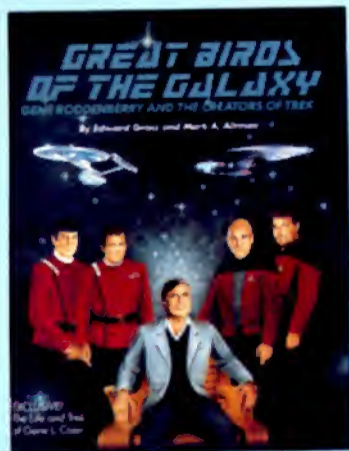
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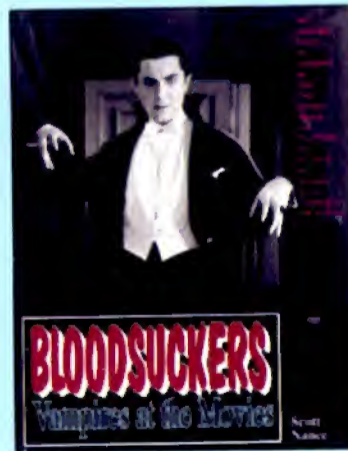
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